

COMPLETE
POEMS
OF
TOM MACINE

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THE COMPLETE POEMS
OF
TOM MACINNES



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COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINES



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AMBER LANDS

AMBER LANDS

AN INKLING

*THRO' my uncertain heart a moody tide
Of mere emotion evermore doth steal,
Fleck't with shining passions that appeal
For solace that is evermore denied.
But as the waters that elusive glide
Thro' lonely forests doubtful yet reveal
Some Ocean faith—so unafraid I feel
To test with Death this heart unsatisfied.*

*And from that tide thro' late haphazard years
I've gathered crystall'd words sometimes—like
these:
Things marvell'd out from many memories:—
Uncanny songs, wherein withal one hears
Some undertone of happier melodies,
Or rhythm falling from enchanted spheres.*

AMBER LANDS

1

IN a luminous valley once I awoke
To the amber sound of lutes;
And I ate of the bread of a sylvan folk,
With elvish herbs and savory roots,
And I drank of the innocent wines
Made by their maidens from mandarin fruits
Pluckt from low-lying luxurious vines
In the somnolent heart of the valley.

And the sylvan folk have a simple creed:
To make with their hands whatever they need,
And to live and be kind in the Sun:
To be one with the good brown Earth, and eat
Good things the Sun hath shone upon
Till they be ripe and sweet:
And watch the flocks meanwhile that feed
In the blue up-lands of the valley.

And aptly enough they sow and spin
In manner of antique industry,
And metals they mould and various glass
And motley pottery,
Taught by priests of a gentle class

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

In league with pale high Powers,
For whom they have builded singular towers
In a grove of cypress trees,—
Towers of granite and bronze, wherein
Magic they make and medicine,
Or busied with their dim auguries
The hollows of space and cycles immense
They measure with intricate instruments.

But I mind how more it pleasur'd me
In the drowsy grass for hours and hours
To lie with the faintly conscious flowers,
Far up on the slope of the valley;
Or run with the younger sylvan folk,
So handsome and sturdy they be,
At play in a forest of maple and oak,
A-romping healthily—
A-romping unkempt and all at their ease,
And kindly under the kindly trees
Doing whatever and ever they please
Consistent with courtesy.

O in youth I sail'd unusual seas,
And still I recall me lands like these,
Where they do whatever they please, dear Lord,
Whatever and ever they please!

2

Roaming I met the gentle maid
Whom forest-folk and hunters call
The Chatelaine of Ronzival.
'Twas under a cliff in the everglade

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Where the icy waters bubble forth;
In velvet green was she array'd
After the fashion of the North:
O gentle maid, for thy heart's ease
Venture with me far over the seas!

There is a room in Ronzival
Rich with bronze, and panell'd all
In oak grown dull with time:
About the lancet windows there
Masses of ivy climb:
And some few roses, fair, O fair,
Wave in the Northern summer air!

The Sun was sinking thro' the pines,
While I was guest of the Chatelaine;
Ruddily in slanting lines
Thro' each lancet window-pane
It lit the panell'd inner wall
Of that room in Ronzival,
With its bronze and quaint designs
And stilted things armorial:
O gentle maid, for thy heart's ease,
Venture with me far over the seas!

At table by a window-seat
The gentle maid sat long with me,
And shyly of her courtesy
She bade me drink and eat;
Out of a hammer'd silver dish
She chose me cakes and comfits fine,
From a flagon twisted dragonish
She pour'd me amber wine.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

O gentle maid, our game is play'd,
The dragon is calling, calling!—
While over the cliffs in the everglade
The lonely waters falling
Blanch at the sound, and shiver afraid,—
Aye, 'tis the dragon calling!

With chilling breath and bitter rime
Cometh soon the winter-time:
Ah, see how she hath grown so frail,
Her form so slight, her face so pale!
I fear the gnomes of Niffelheim
Will take her craftily,
And in a vault with marble stay'd,
Where long-forgotten saints have pray'd,
Her delicate body will be laid,
Cover'd with greenery:
While down the ragged silver steep
Where the gnomish waters creep
Somnolent, sonorous, deep,
With her ancient friends
Lost to thee her soul shall sleep
Till the legend ends!
Nay, gentle maid, for thy heart's ease,
Venture with me far over the seas,
And we shall go free of their wizard hands,
Away and away in the amber lands!

3

From Mozambique I sought Zambar
On board an old felucca:
And nigh the Mosque in the Moon Bazar
I got me a chanted hookah:
Its outer bowl was all inscribed

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

With golden arabesqueries,
And cryptic formulæ founded on
The amorous songs of Solomon,
Or Paynim mysteries.
But the learned Moulah whom I bribed
Gave me no meaning of these:
Only, observing the courtesies,
To me he show'd, while the fire in it glow'd,
A manner of taking my ease;
From the worry of life, with its folly and strife,
A marvellous good surcease.
And the years have come, and the years have flown,
But the hookah still hath power;
And many a scintillating hour
I win in the midst of miseries,
Smoking aright in the manner unknown,
With suitable ceremonies.

And haply, if someone understands,
And shares the hour with me,
As once I mind at Joloban,
Tala Tavern, Joloban,
Where I met the scholar man,
With his sister Zulie,
As then, if someone understands,
And shares the hour with me,
We talk of ships and caravans,
And all the valorous merchantry
Of purple seas and yellow sands
Beyond Crim-Tartary.

I have my chanted hookah still,
But now, when its fragrant bowl I fill,

And its dreamful smoke I draw and blow,
 Watching it go—slow—so—
 Round and round the carbuncle glow—
 O then I remember things like these,
 How in youth I sail'd unusual seas,
 And I would a-roving go.
 I have my chanted hookah still,
 But the core of the world has not been seen,
 And lands unknown yet lie between
 The roots of Ygdrasil.
 And what of that garden Hesperides,
 Forgotten this long, long while?
 And the palmy cliffs of Hy-Brasil
 And good Saint Brendan's Isle?
 And they tell in Arabian histories
 Of venturings to ravish me,
 And delectable zones of heathenry
 Down under the Lost Indies!
 But now I would know of their verity,
 And to what each tale alludes,
 So I will again to the solitudes,
 And the winds I will be loving,
 And leave these weary latitudes
 And for the love of God go roving:
 While yet the soul of me understands
 The ways that lead to amber lands—
 A vagabond here if you please, among these,
 With my unheeded song,
 But a rover by right thro' amber lands—
 Thro' the amber light of amber lands
 That I have loved so long—so long!

THE MOONLIT WHEAT

1

O LOVE of mine! amid the moonlit wheat
Of harvest-fields how fair—how lily-sweet—
I saw thee stand and signal me alone
To that untrodden vale that was thine own
On that last night of all that we did meet,—
O love of mine amid the moonlit wheat!

2

No thing within that region was astir:
Entranced I saw it all as if it were
The scenery of a dream wrought to express
The longing of my heart, thy loveliness,
And that unseen romance whose theatre
Must be in regions where no thing's astir.

3

Quaint and low, like some remote bassoon,
Across the marsh there came a muffled croon,
And all alone one melancholy frog,
Squat on the butt of a sunken cedar log,
Solemnly did serenade the Moon:—
In tone so low and quaint—like the quaint bassoon.

4

While in an elm-tree an oriole
Trilled out a rural evensong that stole
In drowsy cadence from the upper air;—
O Love of mine, in Eden unaware
Some angel slept to let our spirits stroll,
While o'er us sang that golden oriole!

5

And far above the starlit skies unroll'd
 A spell of silence, and of things untold,
 That seal'd our lips; the warm ripe wheat, caress'd
 By Zephyrs scented from the sultry West,
 Went rippling like a sea of pallid gold,—
 Under those starlit skies, so wide unroll'd.

6

But when I loos'd thy heavy wheaten hair
 To curl and shimmer in the cooling air,
 Past coy denial, and virginal disguise,
 I read the unutter'd secret in thine eyes
 Of all thou wouldst surrender to me there,—
 The while I loos'd thy thick wheat-colored hair.

7

And Time went by—and Time was naught to us:—
 Only our wistful hearts grew tremulous
 To hear the Zephyrs in sweet union sigh,
 While slowly in the fulness of the sky
 The lucent Moon herself sank amorous:—
 And Time went by—and Time was naught to us.

8

Alas! how now the serpent years unfold
 Sharp treacheries, and pangs unknown of old!
 Yet once to have had thee mine—once to have felt
 In thy caresses all my being melt
 To passion's last felicity,—I hold
 Worth every pang these serpent years unfold.

9

And oft I loose the gates of Memory
 To seek amid the uncertain scenery,
 Some evanescent vision of thee, pale,
 Within the silence of a moonlit vale
 Where none may follow, and where none may
 see,—
 Beyond the darkling gates of Memory.

10

I am thy lover still, O Love of mine!
 My heart shall never lose the fire of thine;
 And tho' I bide in loneliness and pain,
 My soul shall hold her peace, and not complain,
 Trusting somehow, somewhere, these arms shall
 twine
 Round thy sweet self again, O Love of mine!

IN ERRANTRY

BECAUSE I'm drunken with unknown nectars,
 From ways made over-strait I turn; in sooth
 My heart is only half inclin'd to truth
 Of learned scrolls and saintly calendars:
 Bald Science misses, and Religion mars
 What I have found, tho' blundering and uncouth,
 For I was wronged with Wonder in my youth,
 And dazed with visions of forbidden Stars.

I was a minstrel boy in errantry
 Roving the mossy ways of old Romance
 In chase of Beauty, whose elusive glance
 Thro' hapless ventures lured me brokenly:
 But now of her I've had such great joyance
 That this dour World shall never sober me.

THE LOST CASTLE

ONCE upon a time there stood
A Castle by the Western sea:
Near by there was a gnomish wood
Ancient and wild with glamorie
Of ferly things wrought secretly:
There I was free as it were mine,
For those who ruled were kin to me:
But the Lords o' the Castle are dead lang syne!

Oft in that wood from my old beldame
I fled thro' hushed elf-haunted ways:
But the clatter there was when the gay Lords came
Laughing back from their brave forays!
Great sport they had, and high feast days,
Follow'd by long red nights of wine,
With ball and banquet rooms ablaze:
But the Lords o' the Castle are dead lang syne!

A moment now to me it seem'd
As if low golden bells had rung
Out of the forest where I dream'd
Years ago when I was young:
And even now 'twas on my tongue
To tell a tale too fair and fine
For the like of these I dwell among:
But the Lords o' the Castle are dead lang syne!

Slow accumulating hours!
And the last rays of the Sun shine
Redly over the ruin'd towers!
But the Lords o' the Castle are dead lang syne!

FEY

1

UP from a sea that was Celtic,
On a midsummer night of old,
A fairy rose in the moonlight
Where the swooning waters roll'd
To a crag that was crown'd with a castle,
Irregular, round and high—
The castle bold, embattled,
Of days gone by.

2

And a piper paced the ramparts
In his own clan-tartan clad,
With the ancient arms accoutred
That his father's father had;
And the pipes that he play'd were chanting
Of valor and Highland pride—
To the tune of them kings had conquer'd,
And heroes died.

3

Tho' only a lad come twenty,
He could hold with any man,
And well was he taught in the music,
And well could he lead his clan;
And the gallant air he was playing
He played as never before—
Then he ceased and drew from its scabbard
His bright claymore.

4

And he waved it aloft, exulting
 In the promise of coming years,
 And feats of arms and glory
 Got from the shock of spears—
 Ah! the glint of that jewell'd claymore
 That his father's father had—
 'Twill be handled with honor surely
 By that gay lad!

5

But O, my Bonnie, my Bonnie!
 What sound is this in thine ears,
 That no man nor maid in the castle
 Nor drousing warder hears?
 What music around thee is rising?
 What Orient notes unknown?
 O out on the sea what is singing
 By the lone—by the lone?

6

In a maze he listen'd unmoving
 Thro' the long sweet summer night
 To the song of the water-kelpie,
 Till the moon sank out of sight;
 And the kitchen maids of the castle
 Found him at break of day,
 As they thought, on the ramparts, drunken:
 He was fey—he was fey!

7

And the thrall of a lordly ambition,
 And the combat for lands and gold,
 And titles and trinkets of honor,
 And things that are bought and sold,
 O! thereafter he held them so lightly!
 But aye as he went on his way,
 Of a song he would be singing:
 He was fey—he was fey!

8

The chieftain of all most gentle,
 Most ready with loyal sword,
 But not in the years did he prosper,
 And he fail'd of the World's reward;
 His king gave his lands to a stranger,
 And his lady was lost, they say;
 And he died in a battle, forgotten—
 Well-a-day—well-a-day!

9

Comes something akin to a feeling
 That no language of men can define,
 Not to one in a million revealing
 Its meaning by symbol or sign,
 But told of in Sagas and olden
 Legends of longing and weir—
 A sound in a silence too golden
 For many to hear.

10

Moments remote, unimagi'n'd,
 That come and go in a breath,
 Thro' the light of long days uneventful,
 In the pallor of imminent death;
 In the fire of some red revolution,
 Perchance in the tapers' shine
 On some extravagant altar,—
 Some say in wine.

11

No matter, if only—if only
 That sound from the silence it brings;
 That ray from the occult reunion
 Found in the finish of things;
 Unfitted thereafter, exalted,
 Uncaring, they pass among men,
 And the World, as they knew it, is never
 The same again.

12

Once, in the dull way of mortals,
 As I lay in a stupor, I felt,
 As I fancied, the palpable portals
 Of darkness commingle and melt
 Away into somnolent gardens,
 Hidden forever from day:
 Ah! from them I never would waken,
 Could I stay—could I stay!

13

Could I dream within arbors Lethean,
Where the poppies that nod in the night
Have yielded at last to the perfume
Of roses enchantingly white;
Where Morphia lies, and her lore is
Reveal'd, and her secrets are told
In fragments of fathomless stories
Forgotten of old!

14

O souls made fit for the losing
Of all that the World implies,
Yet who tread not the pathway of heroes,
Nor of saints that agonize,
What vision is this that you treasure
Like children, until you are grey?
Elusive, alluring forever,—
You are fey—you are fey!

IN A NORTHERN LANE

IRENE, I saw thee
Once in the wane
Of twilight in June
In a Northern lane,
Whose borders were bower'd
In maples, and flower'd
With lilacs new-open'd by rain.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Instant an ardor
Too sweet to restrain,
Too wildly entrancing
For words to explain,
Was born of that meeting,
All silent, ungreeting,
But thrilling my every vein.

Forlorn then I falter'd,
I look'd on thee fain,
As one who might venture
Thy favor to gain;
There and then—only
The charm of thy lonely
Beauty made me refrain.

Sylph of the Summer,
In Summer's domain,
That mortal like me
May never attain,
As a star unabiding
I follow'd thee—gliding
By me in dainty disdain.

Now amorous Night
In passion and pain
Yields me thy vision
Again and again—
In dreams that enthrall me
I follow and call thee—
Irene, shall it all be in vain?

NOCTURNE

1

'Twas in a garden of the rich
Where all were guests to roam
Down terraced lawns amid the gloam
Of a night in June.

2

Gallants gay, with ladies dight
In silk attire, were there;
But alien fine and debonair
Stood one alone.

3

And of that throng I knew not which
Could claim such cousin fair;—
Akin she seem'd to the merest air
Of a night in June.

4

An orchid born of the young moonlight
That trails thro' tropic bowers;
I found her 'mong those Northern flowers
So all alone,

5

Till our hostess, with a smile,
Came and led me to
That orchid-maid—and then all through
That night in June

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

6

There came none other to my sight;
The orbéd orange glow
Of lanterns lit a path to go
Off alone

7

Where bronzed Mexicans the while
On mandolins did play
Love tunes of Spain that seem'd to say
That night in June:

8

"O Senorita of Delight!
Lo, the hour of bliss!
Lo, the years have bloomed for this—
This alone!

9

"No carven Saint in marble niche
That pilgrims kneel before;—
No dream of Eldorado's shore
On nights in June

10

"Can lure across the tossing seas
With promise more divine
Than can the beauty that is thine—
Thine alone.

11

“Lo, this garden of the rich
Made wide for us, and free!
With all the crescent witchery
Of a night in June!

12

“And lo, the over-arching trees
That cover us from sight!
O Senorita of Delight!
Here—alone!”

FAREWELL

1

I WILL not seek thee for mine own,
I would not mar thy fate;
I will not breathe one vain regret
That we have met too late.

2

I will not venture now to hope
Thy path may intertwine
By sweet, unseen and secret ways
In happier days with mine.

3

But, Lady, I would have thee know
This once ere we do part
Since first I met thee thou hast been
An idol in my heart,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

4

Before whose solitary shrine,
When night o'ercometh me,
My soul yet keeps one crimson gleam
To dream and dream of thee.

5

To dream what now thou may'st not hear,
What now I may not tell;—
Ah, Lady mine, those dreams are past
With this—my last farewell!

THE WANTON YACHT

1

OVER the sea at sunset
I heard sweet music ring,
And I saw a white yacht sailing,
And I heard a fair crew sing:
Bravehearts! Sweethearts!
We sail the Wanton Yacht;
And anywhere and everywhere
That's far away and faint and fair
Is the goal of the Wanton Yacht;
Yo ho!
For the goal of the Wanton Yacht!

2

Long I heard entrancing
Strains that came to me
Out of the deepening twilight,
Over the purple sea:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Bravehearts! Sweethearts!

We sail the Wanton Yacht,
Free as the wave and the careless breeze,
With only our hearts, Sweethearts, to please,
On the deck of the Wanton Yacht,

Yo ho!

For the deck of the Wanton Yacht!

3

Blue of the summer evening,
Dark like a sapphire stone,
And the Yacht was hid in the gloaming
As I sang by the sea alone:

Bravehearts! Sweethearts!

Sail on in the Wanton Yacht!
And would that I were with you this night!—
With youth and love and the loose delight
Of life on the Wanton Yacht—

Yo ho!

For life on the Wanton Yacht!

THE ARBOR ARABESQUE

1

'Twas in an arbor arabesque

Where tangling vines did screen
From watchful eyes, I met thee first,
O wan and witching, passion-curst
Irene!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

2

Thy kinsmen kept thee from the World,
Cold as a cloister'd maid,
Destin'd for gold and high degree,
And deem'd their iron will by thee
Obey'd.

3

A flower to bloom in stately halls,
Ancestral and alone
They thought thee all too chill and pure
To break the seal of love's allure
Unknown.

4

Ah, witching one! I pledge thee still
For the ruddy wanton tide
That flush'd the virgin veins in thee
With young desire that would not be
Denied!

5

That welcom'd me in the wandering days
When once, by starry chance,
I found thee in that Northern wold
Reading an Orient rhyme of old
Romance!

6

Oblivious to all else beside,
Thine eyes were dreaming o'er
A quaintly pictur'd open book
Of tales once told to Lalla Rookh
Before

7

Her minstrel lover left her side,
In humble guise grown dear,
To claim her where his palace tower'd
Within the vale of rose-embower'd
Kashmir.

8

But what to me that day were all
The songs of minstrelsy?—
Of maids who sigh'd and knights who dared
In ancient days?—I only cared
To see

9

Thy silken hammock swinging low,
In crimson tangles wrought;—
Thy body curving light and free
Within its yielding tracery;—
Methought

10

No houri-haunted bower upbuilt
By dreaming Saracene
E'er greater beauty did enshrine,
Or loveliness surpassing thine,
Irene!

11

Long 'neath the vine-clad arch I stay'd
Of that sweet solitude;
Scarce breathing,—so I found thee fair,
I would not then retreat, nor dare
Intrude.

12

Where slept thy haughty kinsman then,
The while I watch'd unseen,
The tang of those love tales inspire
Thy willing body as with fire,
Irene?

13

No rumor of the World was there;
But round us seem'd to float
A low Eolian undertone
From gloom of royal gardens blown
Remote.

14

And when at last I ventur'd in,
What words I found to say
I know not now—I only know
Thine eyes grew soft, thy voice sank low,
That day.

15

Yet how for me thy love did swift
As some wild rose unfold
Under the sun of summertime,—
Ah, this may not in idle rhyme
Be told!

16

But there were days—sweet stolen days—
Ere dawn'd the wretched morn
That saw that arbor desolate,
And thee consign'd to gilded fate,—
Forlorn.

17

That banish'd me to roam, Irene,
Upon this barren shore:
Thou hast thy gold and high degree—
I go my way and hear of thee
No more.

18

Yet still in memory thou art mine,—
Still one midsummer night
For me is glimmering in the past
With the passion of its last
Delight.

19

When the elfin zephyrs follow'd thee,
And their balmy breath did steep
All the dusk and sultry air
That waver'd softly round us there
With sleep.

20

For on that night—that only night—
When thou wast mine, Irene!
When thou did'st lavish all thy charms
On me, and tremble in my arms,
And lean

21

Back in glad abandon to
My passionate embrace,
Love leapt to flame that all thy tears
Could not then quench,—nor after years
Efface.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

22

Out of the arbor arabesque,
In the deep midsummer night,
I saw thee pass, and it seem'd the gleam
Of a falling star,—and it seem'd a dream
In flight.

23

O wan Irene, so far from me,
I know not where thou art!
But I love thee, and I'll love thee till
Death's final hand shall touch and still
My heart!

24

Nay, through the night of the afterdeath,
And the ghastly vast ravine,
'Gainst all obstructions of the dead
I'll win some way to thee, dream-led,
Irene!

EDGAR ALLAN POE

A STAR-EYED captive, in a lonely tower,
Look'd o'er a lake outspread in sullen gloom,
Illumin'd with infrequent lily bloom.
There wayward Zephyrs sounded hour by hour
Upon a harp whose pure Eolian power
Beguil'd him, as he paced his haunted room,
To songs ne'er heard before—voicing a doom
That from the very Heavens seemed to lour.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

He sang the songs of Death till Death, his theme,
Engulf'd him in that Night of Mystery
Wherein so often he had peer'd to see
The trail of vanish'd Love—the Elysian gleam
Upleading to a starry destiny—
Twinkling from the very gates of Dream.

IDLEWILD

1

ONCE in the land of the Maple,
In the midmost Autumn time,
The mellow, waning, yellow,
Indian summer time,
With the maid Estelle I stray'd
To gather leaves in a lonely glade
Afar in the forest of Idlewild—
Forgotten Idlewild.

2

And we linger'd there, for we sought
The choicest of the leaves;
'Twas hard to choose, and we could not
Decide on the loveliest leaves;
But all that dying Indian day,
While it waned and waned away,
How they floated round us, glinting
In the amber light, and tinting
All the aisles of Idlewild!
All the aisles and hidden places
Where the forest interlaces
O'er the paths in Idlewild!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

How they vanish'd, strangely hinting
Of the silent other spaces
 More remote in Idlewild!
Fell or vanish'd, ever hinting
Of the secret that effaces
 All the joy of Idlewild!

3

Till the Gates of the West were open'd—
 O! the Gates of the West are wide!
And the amber light sank down and flow'd
 Away in a wine-red tide;—
Away thro' the forest of Idlewild
 In a wine-red, weird tide.

4

But the leaves drank deep till they drain'd
 The wine-light out of the West;—
The last of the wine, till it stain'd
 Their hearts with the hues of the West,—
 With the hectic hues of the West.

5

Ah, now in the land of the Maple,
 In the midmost Autumn time,
The mellow, waning, yellow,
 Indian summer time,
Disconsolate I roam
 Afar within the aisled,
Olden, silent, golden
 Forest of Idlewild,—
Forest of lonely memories only,—
 Silent and golden-aisled.

6

But I find therein no solace save
 At a spot made holy with tears;
 At a spot where the ancient branches wave
 O'er the palest dead that ever they gave
 To that forest made holy with tears.
 And the hours pass there unheeded by
 As I dream o'er the remnant leaves that lie
 Strewn from the dim receding years
 Deep on her grave.

7

O, Estelle, beloved!
 Maid of my heart's one dream!
 Thy vision thro' far Elysian
 Vistas I see in my dream;—
 Vistas that loom thro' the ultimate West,
 Wherein thy soul hath sunk to rest; —
 O richer than life in a dream sublime,
 Beyond the tremor and touch of Time!

THE WRONG WAY

1

I WOKE to find me lying in
 A lonely desert place,
 Wreathing, silent, silver sands
 Caress'd my hands and face;
 Of hill or tree or human thing
 I saw nor sign nor trace.

2

But the glad dreams that children dream
Come not more fine or fair:
Unto that lone awakening
I can no thing compare:
I laugh'd for mere delight to breathe
The bloomy golden air.

3

Loosely I was clad in white,
With a girdle at my waist;
And from my soul seem'd every stain
Of care and pain effaced:
A nodding wreath of poppy flowers
Upon my brow was placed.

4

I kiss'd my naked arms, my heart
With even rapture beat
When curious hands, blue-vein'd and wan,
I laid upon my feet:
The trickling sands about them seem'd
Like waters cool and sweet.

5

And long I look'd in silence o'er
The silvery expanse:
Anon with music's daft employ
I did my joy enhance:
No siren e'er had flutier voice
To give it utterance.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

6

Alas, but this did not suffice—
The more I sang the more
Methought the sands alluringly
Did beckon me explore
What splendid city lay beyond—
What foam-besprent seashore!

7

Then up I rose and sought the West,
Wherein the Sun declin'd:
And light and gaily on I flew,
While ever blew behind,
Outspreading wide my yellow hair,
A wonder breathing wind.

8

On and on and ever on,
With white, untiring feet;
And over sands interm'nable
Ne'er fled gazelle so fleet
To find what faery thing might be
Where sky and desert meet.

9

How many a sore and stricken heart
Might then have envied me
That silent, soothing, desert land!—
So vacant and so free!
That shelter in the far away
Of sunlit liberty.

10

And soon with scarce a motion of
My own I smiled to find
How all unstriving I did fly:—
Then reckless I resign'd
My body as a burden blithe
Unto the eager wind.

11

And on and on and ever on
I held my steady way;
And felt the passion of that flight
No distance might allay;
Not e'en the stars' cool benison
At ending of the day.

12

But with amaze I saw at last
How huge the sun did shine:
And this also I marvell'd o'er—
It did no more decline,
But red and eerie linger'd on
The far horizon line.

13

Yet on and on and ever on
The silver sands I spurn'd,
Till in the nearing western sky
My ghastly eye discern'd
What awful flames were writhing where
The seeming sun had burn'd.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

14

And from those flames there rear'd aloft
Revolting smoke and fume:
Riven by many a fiery streak
The pitchy reek did loom
Prodigious thro' the night that lour'd
Above that Pit of Doom.

15

Then went the sands to ashes grey
That smoulder'd 'neath my feet:
The wind, a tempest horrible,
Now baffled all retreat;
And soon upon my twitching face
I felt the searing heat.

16

The wreath of scarlet poppy flowers
Fell withering and dead:
The scars upon my burning brow
Were scarlet now instead;
My girdle to a serpent turn'd,
Biting, and bloody red.

17

My hair, all in a moment grey,
And monstrous overgrown,
That rigid in the reeking night
With drear affright had flown,
Around me in outrageous worms
Of horror now was blown.

18

Till came the end where seems no end—
 My body sway'd and whirl'd
 Frantic on the lurid edge
 Where Hell doth hedge the World:
 Then down the flaming Pit of Doom,
 Shrieking to God, 'twas hurl'd!

IN THE AFTERDEATH.

1

IN a way no man can tell
 I heard the tolling of a bell
 And stunn'd and stricken downward into nether
 space I fell;
 To a sphere
 Most curst and drear,
 And for the damn'd ordained,
 Where feeble in the rayless air they bide as souls
 enchain'd.

2

Only unavailing
 Vacant spectres round me paling,
 Thro' the dismal gloom abysmal
 Gape and grin upon me, railing
 With a sound of silly laughter,
 For they greet me all with laughter;
 But oh! they vanish wailing from the Echoes that
 come after—
 From things that rise enormously
 Out of Nothing—seizing me
 In a slow unfolding Horror of Infinity;

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Yet within the awful coil
Something still survives to foil
The Horror ere it quite attains
To my soul—and then it wanes
Into Nothingness again—and still one hope re-
mains;
When the Horror shudders down one starry hope
remains
To piece the evil darkness thro' and loosen all
my chains.

3

Athwart the gloom
In pale magnificence uploom
Titanic walls;
And lo! my doom is riven by a radiance from those
walls;—
By the ruby-tinted hue
Of a radiance rolling through
A lone heart-shapen window carven high upon those
walls.

4

Then down the far-enrhythm'd deep
Sounds of passing sweetness sweep
That lull me into dreaming and the semblance of a
sleep.
Ethereal
I hear a call
In the tranced interval
Cleaving thro' Oblivion and lifting from its
thrall;
And I reach the lustrous edge
Of that lonely window-ledge
To peer among the marvels of the rising carnival.

5

But ah! despite
 Satanic splendors opening in the heart of endless
 night—
 Despite the masque and pageantry,
 And music string'd in wizardry
 Of ways and modes unknown—
 Down the ruby-corridor'd,
 Ebon-vault'd, ebon-floor'd,
 Halls of Eblis unexplor'd,
 I strive alone to see
 The eidolon of one ador'd
 Whose call uplifted me:
 And those chasmal, lost, fantasmal
 Halls of Eblis unexplor'd
 Yield to me at length the sight
 Of One apparell'd all in white,
 Thro' the wide Pavilion gliding with the wine of
 red delight:—
 One apparell'd as a woman—
 Yearning to me as a woman—
 With the love I dream'd of
 Once—when human.

6

Then elate
 I cling and wait
 For the ransom necromantic yet to free me from
 this fate:
 But alas! the incense curling
 From before her keeps unfurling
 Dim narcotic veils between us till I swoon intoxi-
 cate:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

From the luring and the lumen
Of her beauty, more than human,
Backward thro' the demon deep I swoon intoxi-
cate—

Beyond recall I swoon and fall
Into the black Oblivion that now devoureth all.

UNDERGROUND

1

ON a queer, queer journey
I heard the queerest sound,—
'Twas the Devil with a banjo
In a cavern underground,
Where the merry, merry skeletons
Were waltzing round and round,
While the clicking of their bones kept time.

2

Thro' a low, iron door,
With a huge iron bar,
A door perchance some careless
Imp had left ajar,
I crept behind a column cut
All out of Iceland spar,
And the carven angles twinkled frostily.

3

I was frighten'd of the Devil,
And I wouldn't look at him,
But I watch'd a thousand goblins
From nook and cranny dim
A-glowing on the skeletons,
And every goblin grim
And ugly as an old gargoyle.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

4

And bogles play'd on fiddles
To help the banjo out,
For 'twas nothing but the music
Kept alive that crazy rout;
But the big green toads could
Only hop about
To the rumbling of the bass bassoon.

5

Behind the Iceland column
I watch'd them on the sly,
Above them arch'd the cavern
With its roof miles high,
All ribb'd with blue rock-crystal, shining
Bluer than the sky,
And studded with enormous stalactites.

6

But the lovely floor below,
With its level crystalline
Splendid surface spreading
Radiantly green!—
As if a lone, impearled lake
Of waters subterrene
Had frozen to a flawless emerald!

7

And down, down, down,
Its moveless depths were clear;
And down, down, down,
In wonder I did peer
At lost and lovely imagery
Beneath me far and near,—
Silent there and white forevermore.

8

But from the sunken beauty
 Of that white imagery
 Lissome shadows loosen'd,
 Flame-like and fitfully,
 That form'd anon to spheres serene
 And mounted airily,
 And broke in golden bubbles thro' the floor.

9

There, bubble-like, they vanish'd
 Amid the whirling crew,
 Yet left a radiance trailing
 Slowly out of view,
 That sometimes o'er the skeletons
 Such carnal glamour threw,
 It flatter'd them to human shape again.

10

How long I watch'd I know not;
 The weird hours went on,
 Lost hours that bring the midnight
 No nearer to the dawn,
 When suddenly I felt a clutch,
 And swiftly I was drawn
 From out behind that carven block of spar.

11

My soul!—a skeleton!—
 A rattling little thing,
 Twined itself about me
 As close as it could cling!
 And in its arms with horror I
 Perforce 'gan circling,
 Compell'd by that fantastic orchestra.

12

Onward swept the waltzers
 To the wicked tunes they play'd,
 And soon we were amongst them,
 And my rattling partner sway'd
 When'er the golden bubbles broke,
 And trailing lights array'd
 Elusively around its naked bones.

13

A minute or an hour,—
 Or maybe half a night,—
 No matter, for at last
 I was over all my fright,
 And the music rippled through me till
 I shivered with delight,
 Fascinated like the fat green toads.

14

And by and by I noticed
 How 'mid that grisly swarm
 My clinging little partner
 'Gan strangely to transform,—
 I saw the bones as thro' a mist
 Of something pink and warm,
 That quiver'd and grew firm from top to toe.

15

Bright copper-color'd hair
 Soon round her head did curl,
 Her mouth grew sweet with tints
 Of coral and of pearl,
 And she looked on me with eyes that seem'd
 Of lambent chrysoberyl,
 While her body fair as alabaster shone.

16

A witch she was so lovely,
To all else I was blind,
And the Devil and the goblins
And the rout we left behind,
In our wild waltz whirling on
The cool sweet wind
Of the lone lorn caverns underground.

17

Like rose-leaves strewn
Upon a crystal tide,
Like thistle-down blown
By Zephyrs far and wide,
We swept in aimless ecstasy,
Silent side by side,
Careening thro' those caverns underground.

18

A minute or an hour,—
Or maybe half a night,—
No way have I to measure
The madness of that flight,
For the loosen'd zone of witchery
Made drunk with sheer delight,
Till we sank in happy stupor to the floor.

19

Near by there was a grotto
That open'd chapel-wise,
As from a rich cathedral
In sacrilegious guise;
On the high Masonic altar were
Three crystal chalices,
And they held the sweetest poisons Hell can
brew.

20

One was a liquor golden
 That sparkled like the dew,
 One was a wine that trembled,
 And blood-red was its hue,
 But the last Lethean elixir
 Was dark as night, shot through
 With glimmerings of green and violet.

21

Then rose the witch and mutter'd,
 "Quick, for the hour is late!
 Quick ere the music ceases
 And the locks of the dungeons grate
 O'er the host of haunted `skeletons
 That here brief revel make!
 Come free me by this altar's alchemy!

22

"Drink thou the golden liquor
 That lights yon jewell'd rim,—
 That sparkles fair as sunshine
 On curls of seraphim!
 Drink for the love I gave thee!
 Or drink for a devil's whim!
 But pledge me to the time that yet shall be!

23

"But the gloomy elixir
 Give me, that I may sleep
 With the white wraiths that slumber
 In the dim green deep!
 Where the silence of the under-world
 Shall wrap me round and keep
 My soul untouch'd by any dreams of day!"

24

I drank the cup of sunshine,
She drank the cup of night,
But the red we spill'd between us
For sacrifice and plight
Of passion that must centre in
The sphereless Infinite
Ere her sweet life shall mix with mine again.

25

A moment all her beauty
Was lighten'd as with fire,
Her fair, voluptuous body
With its trailing, loose attire,
And her eyes to mine did glow as in
A sunset of desire,—
Then prone she fell upon the chapel floor.

26

And the white flesh wasted from her
As she was falling dead,
Her very bones had crumbled,
Ere one farewell I said,—
From sight of that dire sorcery
In wild dismay I fled,
Seeking madly for the low iron door.

27

Behind the Iceland column
I found it still ajar,—
Thro' galleries of darkness
I travell'd swift and far,
Until I reach'd the upper-world
And saw the morning star
Paling o'er a meadow by the sea.

YOLANA.

1

THERE'S a by-road the saints fear,
And the wizards seek in vain;
Ayont the day 'tis quite near,
Yet the way of it is too queer
For me to make it plain;
But we find our track by the Zodiac,
Then a body parts in twain,
And we be lift in a mode to the mere
Mass a madness vain,
A dream or delusion vain.
Yolana avie avie avie!
Yolana vekana vor!

2

But what and O! what may the mass know
Of the things that are done of us?
On the round hill where we go
To bide our time in the pale glow
For Yolana marvellous?
And visions evoke by sweet smoke
And breathings tremulous?
Nay, the sound of words may not show
The things that are done of us—
Remotely done of us!
Yolana avie avie avie!
Yolana vekana vor!

3

A gold star in the West glow'd
Thro' a night obscurely clear;
'Twas the dry time when the winds bode
Thro' the treetops, and the tree toad
Answers eerily;

The dwarf came with the swart name
A-whispering in my ear;
And I nodded and took the by-road
Thro' the night obscurely clear
As a smoky-topaz is clear.
Yolana avie avie avie!
Yolana vekana vor!

4

Where the lone pine tree flings
A ragged shadow down
We light the fire, and the dwarf sings
To keep away the bad things
That glimmer about and frown,
As we mix the wine and make the sign
They made in the sunken town:—
Then O! a glory of light wings
Bearing Yolana down!
Yolana avie avie avie!
Yolana vekana vor!

5

But what and O! what may the mass know
Of the things that are done of us?
On the round hill where we go
To slumber in the pale glow
Of planets pendulous?
And out of the skies materialize
Yolana marvellous?
Nay, the sound of words may not show
The things that are done of us—
Remotely done of us!
Yolana avie avie avie!
Yolana vekana vor!

6

O the twinkling stones of faëry
 When Yolana comes!
 All set in the greenest jewelry,
 While the magic smoke goes bluely
 From the burning magic gums!
 And we troll the chants in a ghost-dance
 To the monotone of drums,
 Till we lapse for sheer enchantery
 When Yolana comes!
Yolana avie avie avie!
Yolana vekana vor!

*A tale no man hath told before—
 A way no man hath known.*

THE DAMOZEL OF DOOM

PART I.

1

LIKE as a dream it came to me
 In the lapse of a lonely year;
 In the shade of night I saw the shade
 Of a shrouded maid appear;
 And drawing nigh it leaned o'er me,
 And whisper'd in my ear:

2

"Cold—cold!
 I come from the ghastly cold!
 Where the dead are ever dying
 Alone in the ghastly cold!"

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

3

And then, as if in agony
Constrain'd that gruesome haze,
Its words come forth in hollow sighs,
The while its eyes did blaze
Pale lightnings to my own, now fix'd
In helpless dire amaze:

4

"I am a starveling out of Hell,
A wraith of the restless dead,
And whence the damn'd lie damn'd the most
My riven ghost hath fled
For lust of the radiant life in thee,
And the fume of thy heart so red!

5

"I lust for thy blood and the life of thy blood
But I love thy soul as well,
For the flame of it lit my own anew,
This thing is true I tell;
And the beating of thy heart it was
That loos'd me out of Hell.

6

"For out of the sleep I cannot sleep
Thy soul was roused again;
And thy body was wrought to the same fair mould
As when of old 'twas lain
Within the dust away from me—
The body that I had slain.

7

“O black the night that swallow’d me
When out of the World I fell!
Out of the World, and deep entomb’d,
I found me doom’d to dwell
Where Time is still and Horror stares
On each—immovable.

8

“Cold—cold!
Alone in the ghastly cold!
Where the dead are ever dying
Alone in the ghastly cold!

9

“Nay, listen! I heard like far-off sounds
Sway down thro’ the lees of crime;
And golden was their echoing,
They seem’d to ring a chime
Or words I said—of love I felt—
Long since—in the other time.

10

“And echoing they took a shape,
And circled round and round
As airy, elemental elves,
Then joined themselves and wound
In wreathing ether over me,
And with a crystal sound,

11

“The circle touch’d complete and flash’d
And vanish’d suddenly;
And Time began again—I found
Myself unbound and free—
Free of the silent Horror there
That stared and stared at me.

12

“And I was in the outer night,
And I sought and found thee here;
I saw thy body from afar
As a living star appear,
And fain to drink and slumber in
Its crimson atmosphere—”

13

No other word came audible,
The shade ’gan withering,
As to my cold and shuddering side
It vainly tried to cling;
Then drifted slow away from me,
A wasting, wistful thing.

14

Until in the eerie light at last
I saw it fade and seem
To sink as it were thro’ an ancient grave,
And sinking it gave a scream;
And I awoke and tried to think
’Twas but a passing dream.

15

Cold—cold!
And are the dead so cold?
And are they ever dying
Alone in the ghastly cold?

PART II.

1

That dream came not again to me,
Nor any dream at all;
But well I knew, as the days went past,
There held me fast in thrall
A something of that shrouded thing
That wrapped me like a pall.

2

An aura drear that sever'd me
From men and the ways of men;
As some great evil I had done
My friends did shun me then;
I felt accurst, and kept apart,
And sought them not again.

3

But O how chill the World did grow!
And the Sun, as a thing unreal,
Did glare and glare thro' the vacant day,
And never a ray I'd feel
To warm my blood, the light fell thin
And grey as spectral steel.

4

A pale disease took hold on me,
And when the night would come
I had no rest, but sleepless lay
As stark as clay, and numb;
And could not stir till dawn would break
Nor gasp, for I was dumb.

5

And yet were times all faintly tinged
With a glimmering ecstasy;
Moments that linger'd in their flight,
Trailing a light to me
Elusive and wan as the phosphor foam
That floats on the midnight sea.

6

And out of my stricken body then
My soul would seem to creep,
And over a sheer unfathom'd brink
Of silence sink asleep,
Beyond the shadow and sound of dreams,
And deeper than Earth is deep.

7

Yet ever from those slumber spells,
That seem'd like years, I'd start
Sudden awake, bewilder'd by
A presence nigh my heart,
As if a soul had stirr'd in me
That of me was no part.

8

And so three seasons pass'd away,
 And the early Summer came;
 And still that weird fantasy
 Enshrouded me the same;
 But now it seem'd as luminous
 With some alchemic flame.

9

At length in a garden wide and old,
 A garden all my own,
 One afternoon I lay at ease
 Under the trees alone,
 While the fragrant day fell off in the West
 Like a Titan rose o'erblown.

10

And lying there I dream'd once more,
 And it seemed that a scarlet bird
 Flew out of my heart with a joyous cry,
 To the topmost sky, and I heard
 Her song come echoing down to me,
 Yearning word on word:

11

“Slow—slow!
 O moments—O ages slow!
 But love shall be my own again—
 Be it moments or ages slow!”

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

PART III.

1

I waken'd in the twilight with
A fever at my brain;
All my veins were running fire
With blind desire and pain
Of something that three seasons long
Within my heart had lain.

2

So cruel that first I heeded not
A faint, alluring tune,
Trilling round me everywhere
In the jewell'd air of June,
As far and wide o'er the darkling sky
The crystal stars were strewn.

3

Till over the rim of the World uprose
The slow, round Moon,
And a voice from the inner garden came
That breath'd my name, and soon
Floated full out on the waving air
Trolling a golden croon:

4

“Low—low!
The Moon lies low!
O Love! my Love—come love me
While the Moon lies low!”

5

To the inner garden fast I sped
 Till I came to the inmost tree;
 O the peace of a thousand years I'd give,
 Again to live and see
 The pallid maid of the white, white arms
 Who there awaited me!

6

But I have not the words to tell
 The marvel of that tryst;
 Yet 'twas no phantom I did woo—
 A virgin true I kiss'd,
 With lips full red, and eyes agloom
 With peerless amethyst,

7

And body lined and shapen to
 The last of love's delight;
 I heard her whisper: "I am thine,
 And thou art mine, to-night!"
 And she loos'd the silver zone that bound
 Her garments blue and white.

8

"Low—low!
 The Moon lies low!
 And my love is mine to love me
 While the Moon lies low!"

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

PART IV.

1

"O my beautiful—my bright!
Sweetheart in the cool dim night!
Whispering thro' the starlit silence
Low my name!

2

"With that sound there comes to me
A feeling lit with memory
Of regions lost and times o'erlaid,
And love forgot.

3

"Take me, O dream-laden bride!
To the rapture of thy side,
In this bower of unrevealing
Velvet gloom.

4

"Long, my beautiful, I've waited
For this charmed night—this fated
Hour that yields thee up to me
From years unknown.

5

"Now shall be unveil'd to me
All thy maiden symmetry,
Seen like naked moonlit marble,
Pure and pale.

6

"Till no more thou canst reveal me
Of thy beauty, and I feel thee
As a flower whose touch instilleth
Chill delight.

7

"My Sultana! in thine eyes
Let me gaze, where passion lies
Slumbering still within their sultry
Purple deep!

8

"Till within my arms at last
In love's embrace I hold thee fast—
Till beneath my own I feel
Thy heaving heart!

9

"While I gather—while I crush—
All the fruits of love—the lush
Delirium that dwelleth 'tween
The lips of pain.

10

"O long—O last supreme caress!
O ultimate deliciousness!
O slowly sinking, satiate,
Erotic swoon!

11

"Swoon, my beautiful—my bright!
 Dream far down in the violet night!
 Down—far down, where reigns the dim
 Lethean sleep!"

PART V.

1

My heart is a dry and wither'd thing;
 And I that am young am old
 With brooding in the silentness
 On that caress and fold
 Of white, white arms in the Summer night;
 But the end is still untold.

2

Nor shall be told—for the end is not!
 My soul, 'tween hopes and fears,
 For the pallid maid awaits and yearns,
 Her memory burns and sears:
 But I it was who let her pass
 To the peace of a thousand years.

3

Slow—slow!
 O moments—O ages slow!
 But love shall be my own again—
 Be it moments or ages slow!
*For there be wondrous valleys hid
 Thro' Hell's infernal zone.*

THE GARDENS OF OBLIVION

1

OVER a bleak and barren plain
Where flowers never bloom—
Where never slant the gold sun-bars,
Nor any stars illumine
The dim and sullen atmosphere
There brooding o'er its doom—

2

Alone there went an aged man,
Who bent and cower'd low,
As if across that hopeless waste
In fearful haste to go,
But could not, for his palsied legs
That painful dragg'd, and slow.

3

For age not come of mortal years
Had over him unroll'd;
Like wither'd leaves on winter trees
Dull memories and cold
Still whisper'd dryly at his heart—
But old—old—old!

4

And, tremulous, full oft he turn'd
His haggard, ashen face,
Expectant aye whence he had fled
To loom in dread menace
A stealthy Horror, that e'en now
Crept after him apace.

5

And long he fared with labor'd steps,
 And many moaning sighs,
 Till sudden changed the scene for him—
 He paused in grim surmise,
 And gazed, with feeble hand uplift
 Unto his bleared eyes.

6

For on that plain, whose barrenness
 No future may redeem,
 Now with emotion manifold
 His eyes behold a stream
 Of solemn waters rolling with
 Unbroken ebon gleam.

7.

Behind the haunted desert lay,
 Before a mystery,—
 What hazard there of better plight,
 What dark respite may be,
 Not knowing yet he ventures on,
 Round glancing fearfully.

8

Yet when he reached the reedy shore
 To brave the river's brink,
 Despair almost like peace he felt
 The while he knelt to drink,
 Thinking in those deep waters there
 How easeful he might sink.

9

But as he bent to take the draught
He spied a nearing light;
And down the river slowly drew
A lone canoe in sight,
Wan as a crescent newly-born
Upon the verge of Night.

10

At that his eyes were steadfast set
Upon its glimmering rim;
Above the current visible
The dainty shell did swim,
Until it gleam'd upon the tide
All fair abreast of him.

11

Then forth the old man stretch'd his arms,
With mutter'd prayer and hoarse;
As if that vessel frail could hear,
It 'gan to veer, perforce
Obedient to his one appeal,
And shoreward bent its course.

12

A moment more upon that shore
And he has parted thence;
He feels the soothing waters roll,
Relieving soul and sense
From every grief by reason of
Their slumberous influence.

13

With closed eyes he lieth there,
And one by one is shorn
Of every thought with sorrow fraught,
Till he hath naught to mourn;
And far upon the bosom of
That river he is borne.

14

His age doth gradual dissolve;
He is no more uncouth;
He feels within an elixir
As if it were in sooth
The blooming of some pale, delicious
Afterflower of youth.

15

And now he's 'ware of warbling sounds,
Faint echoing and blurr'd;
And now of one more clear and strong;
A wondrous song he heard;
It seem'd the happy dreaming of
Some lone entranced bird.

16

A slow and golden slumber song,
Whose languid numbers gloze,—
A witchery of syllables
In woven spells to close
Sad eyes to long forgetfulness,
And marble-like repose.

17

At length the bird's sweet arias
 In fluted notes subside;
 He thinks how near its covert he
 Would peacefully abide;
 Then once again his eyes uncloze
 Upon the river's tide.

18

Around him fell a warm twilight,
 The waters now were blue;
 Far-off appear'd on either hand
 A terraced strand in view,
 Upleading to such gardens as
 No mortal ever knew.

19

And while he gazed that wan canoe
 Unerringly did steer,
 As 'twere a thing of destiny,
 And presently drew near
 A gentle shore outjetting to
 A mottled marble pier.

20

And mooring there he stept ashore,
 Still joyously intent
 On seeking for that singing-bird,
 And garden-ward he went,
 Strolling thro' the solitudes
 In fearless wonderment.

21

'Mid spaces smooth and wide between
Where grow gigantic trees,
Whose branches ever quiver in
The faint, continual breeze,
And tangle up the placid sky
With shifting traceries.

22

Yet many steps he had not gone
Ere strewn upon the ground,
Or gleaming from recesses dim,
Or near to him, he found
Abandon'd bodies beautiful
In charmed slumber bound.

23

Comely youths and maidens in
Secluded dells alone,
Or else in easy groups reclin'd,
With arms entwin'd—all prone
Like fallen statues carven out
From pallid Parian stone.

24

And some were e'en more fair to see
And shone translucent white;
They seem'd as waning to a sheen
Of pure, serene starlight;
And even as he gazed one slowly
Faded from his sight.

25

Awhile he marvell'd tranquilly,
 And then his eyes did stray
 To where an ancient man appear'd,
 With flowing beard and grey,
 Who musingly toward him bent
 His solitary way.

26

But as he came his footsteps scarce
 The silences bestirr'd;
 He seem'd so rapt with reverent awe,
 He neither saw nor heard
 For holy thoughts that compass'd him,—
 He pass'd without a word.

27

And gravely thro' the mighty glades
 Upon his way he kept,
 That ancient, lone somnambulist,
 Who nothing wist except
 The reveries beguiling him
 Where all the others slept.

28

Then had he mind to follow on
 The Elder for a guide,
 Ere yet the forestry between
 Should weave a screen to hide
 His all-unheeding Druid form
 Which on ahead did glide.

29

And long thro' aisled vistas that
 Bewildering intervene
He follow'd on till he espied
 A vast hillside all green,
With sloping lawns and fountains deckt,
 And high whereon is seen

30

A wondrous gleaming palace built
 Of alabaster stone,
With many a niche and window set
 And minaret far flown
'Bove golden domes outswelling like
 Fantastic fruit o'ergrown.

31

And in its centre wide beneath
 An ever-open door
Gives promise of all pleasantness,
 With rich recess and store
Of priceless treasures taken from
 The palaces of yore.

32

Yet that so easy seeming hill
 Soon fills him with amaze,
Now near, now far, the palace gleams,
 Like one he seems who plays
With quick reverse of optic glass,
 Until at length he strays

33

Unto a fountain playing in
 A single column cool,
 Whose showering waters musical
 With diamonds bejewel
 The silver'd air, returning to
 Their slumber in the pool.

34

And by that fountain's grassy marge
 One peerless maid doth lie,
 Uncompanion'd as a star,
 Her beauties far outvie
 All others in those gardens seen,—
 He will not pass her by.

35

Her face, half pillow'd on her arm,
 Is to his own upturn'd
 So tenderly, that it did seem
 She in her dream discern'd
 His coming, and tho' bound in sleep,
 Still for that coming yearn'd.

36

His last desire finds body here
 The while he bends to kiss
 Her lips that open like a flower—
 What dulcet hour is this!
 And half she wakens in his arms
 While he doth swoon for bliss.

There hath he fallen by her side,
All outer life is spent,
And pale of their enamoured sleep
They yield in deep content;
Thro' ages long to pass away
In utter vanishment.

LONESOME BAR

LONESOME BAR

THE WAY OF BEAUTY.

*Who brings a thought of self to Beauty's shrine,
Or jealous envy, by so much the less
Shall feel within his soul her deep impress—
Shall thrill at quaffing of her mystic wine.
For Beauty hath no care for thine or mine,
But wasteth wide in wanton loveliness;
And only thus, in self-forgetfulness,
Shall any share with her the life divine.*

*O happy he whose heart doth full respond
To wandering Beauty's spell—wherever wrought!
He hath a pleasure finer than all thought
That instant as the touch of fairy wand
Makes rich the World for him, whate'er his lot,—
E'en tho' perchance a homeless vagabond.*

LONESOME BAR

1

Out of the North there rang a cry of Gold!
And all the spacious regions of the West,
From rugged Caribou to where the crest
Of Mexican Sièrras mark the old
Franciscan frontiers, caught the regal sound,
And echo'd and re-echo'd it, till round
The eager World the rumor of it roll'd:
How Eldorado once again was found
Where stretch Canadian plains, forlorn and rude,
Hard upon the iron-temper'd Arctic solitude.

2

Then woke the vanguard of adventurers,
Who fret their souls against the trammel'd ways
And measur'd hours of these exacting days;
They heard the call—the pirate call that stirs
To reach for easy gold in regions new;
That once from lazy Latin cities drew
Pizarro and his pious plunderers,
And, later, many a buccaneering crew
To sail their curly ships across the foam
And loot the Spanish galleons upon the run for
home.

3

So rake the annals of the knave Romance—
 The breed will not die out! The fatal stars
 That sway the line of loose Irregulars
 For evermore 'gainst hazard circumstance,
 Illumin'd thro' those triple golden years
 A trail of splendid hopes and ghastly fears,
 Where only now Aurora gleams askance
 On the twinkling, frosted bones of pioneers;
 But ho! for savage lands alight with spoil—
 For ventures grim and treasure-trove on a stark,
 unheard-of soil!

4

And I went with the crowd who took the trail
 Over the icy Chilcoot; side by side
 Who tugg'd and toil'd and topp'd the White
 Divide,
 Rafted it to Tagish, and set sail
 Down the rapid Yukon long before
 The main rush reach'd the mines. 'Twas no more
 To me than some new game of head-and-tail
 To gamble on; but we drank deep, and swore,
 Around uproarious campfires, that we'd find
 Our fortunes on the Klondike creeks or leave our
 bones behind.

5

But there was a hoodoo on me from the first;
 Tho' everywhere I saw the yellow glance
 Of other's gold, I seem'd to stand no chance
 Locating claims; the hot, mosquito-curst
 And scurvy days went empty-handed by,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

No matter what I'd do or where I'd try;
And every day in passing seem'd the worst,
Until the last day faded from the sky,
And the long, inexorable Night had come,—
Inlocked with cold, and weird stars, and dumb as
a corpse is dumb.

6

I work'd a while that Winter on a lay;
Sixty below, and sleeping in snow-bank'd tents,—
Say, that was the hardpan of experience!
Just earning enough to live, and make a play
On some infernal card that never won;
Or easy by some dance-hall beauty done
For all the dust I had—you know the way:
Snow-blind once, once frozen to the bone,
While mushing with the mails between the creeks;
Then typhoid laid me on my back delirious for
weeks.

7

The river-ice was breaking in the Spring
When first I heard them tell of Lonesome Bar,—
A haggard region hidden in the far
Blank reaches of the North past reckoning.
But the Sun was warm again, 'twas afternoon,
And I was lounging in the Log Saloon,
Ready to turn my hand to anything,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

When in two strangers came with a tale that soon
Drew round the restless crowd, for ever fond
Of newer strikes, and farther fields, and the luck
of things beyond.

8

And well within an hour the rush began,
For the strangers spoke of fortunes in a day;
Careless show'd us nuggets that would weigh
An ounce or more, and told how every man
At Lonesome Bar had sacks of them. Stampede!
Already the sleds are out, and the huskies lead,
Uneasy at their traces in the van,
And yelping 'gainst the time the packers need:
Stampede! Stampede! All hangs on the moment's
haste,—
And it's every man and dog for himself on the end-
less Arctic waste!

9

But the fever shook me still in every bone;
Times I'd feel my legs bend under me,
And every sinew loosen utterly;
And so I fell behind. Yet all alone
I mush'd along for a month as best I could,
And every mile I made was to the good,
For the trail of those ahead in the bleak unknown
I'd savvy enough to keep. At last I stood
One day on a rocky bluff, outworn and weak,
And saw beneath me Lonesome Bar, at the bend
of Boulder Creek.

10

Ah! well I mind the evening that I came!
 The month was June, nigh ripen'd to July,
 And the hour was midnight, yet the Western sky
 From the horizontal Sun was all aflame,
 When with my empty pack I sauntered down
 The one long tented street that made the town,
 Hungry and sick—sick of a losing game,
 And broke for the price of a whiskey-straight to
 drown

The ragged thoughts a-limping thro' my brain—
 Till I saw a crowd and went beside to hear what
 news again.

11

And there was a gaunt old ruffian, shaggy-brow'd,
 Who on a barrel, as far as I could tell,
 Ranted in drunken ecstasy of Hell!
 They suited well his theme—that Klondike crowd:
 Men dogg'd by shadows of despair and crime,
 With women reckless of all aftertime;
 Miners, traders, villains unavow'd,
 And nondescript of every race and clime;
 With the red police of Canada beside—
 For they keep tab on everything clear down to the
 Arctic tide.

12

But Hell! What use had I for Hell that night?
 And sullen I turned away, when I felt a whack
 From a heavy open hand upon my back,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And, turning quick, my doubtful eyes caught
sight
Of a college chum of mine—one Julien Roy—
Whom I'd not seen for years. Christ! 'twas joy
To see the face of him again, and, quite
In his old way, to hear him say, "Old boy!
You're down on your luck, I see! Come on up
town,
Where we can talk and have something to eat, and
something to wash it down!"

13

'Twas like the sudden shining of the Sun!
The flowers forgotten of old fellowship
Went all abloom again,—there seem'd to slip
A weight of wasted years and deeds ill-done
Plumb down and out of my life, with chance to
try
The upward trail again, where he and I
Could venture yet the highest to be won,
Could let the very thought of failure die,
And weave into our lives, from ravell'd ways,
That cord of gold we talk'd about in the far-off
college days.

14

For Julien was a gentleman all through;
He stak'd me then, when I had not a cent,
Braced me up and shared with me his tent,
And help'd in every way a friend could do.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

As to the fortune that is ours to-day,
I stumbled on it in the chancy way
That all things come to me; I cut in two
The likeliest claim I found, ask'd Jule to stay,
And work it with me, share and share alike,—
And in a month at Lonesome Bar 'twas rank'd the
richest strike.

15

One day I left him working on the claim,
I had to buy supplies down at the Bar,
When passing by the dance-hall Alcazar,
Topmost on its board I read a name,
'Beulah, the Singing Girl!' The lesser lights,
The Dogans, with Obesity in tights,
And the boneless Acrobat—same old game—
'Twas not for them I stay'd, nor clownish sights
But I wanted to hear a song—a song to make
The feel of younger days come back until my heart
should ache.

16

Something went wrong with me that night, I
know;
And yet I swear I would not set it right
For all the North and all its gold in sight!
White she was all over, like the snow
That on the glacier in the moonlight lies,
And lissome as a panther when it spies
Its quarry where the forest branches low;
But the luring of her deep-illumin'd eyes,
And voice voluptuous with all desire,
And somewhat else beyond all that fair set my soul
on fire.

17

For Beulah sang a ballad to me then,
Of perilous tune, so put to velvet rime,
'Twas sure the kind that sirens in old time
Sang from the weedy rocks to sailor-men;
And all the while her eyes shone splendidly
At something far too fine for us to see;
But O! at the ending of the ballad, when
Those eyes sank down to rest alone on me,
Full well for one such glance of hers I knew
I'd tip my hat to her command for all that a man
may do.

18

And so enamor'd on the instant grown,
I sprang to meet her when the song was done;
She met me wondrous kind; then one by one
The others drew aside, while we, alone,
Crush'd from the moments, in our eagerness,
A wine of many years, as one would press
Sudden the ripen'd grapes. Ah! we had known,
In some strange way that I'm too old to guess,
A dream of life between, I know not how,
That linked her alien soul to mine with a dream-
outlasting vow!

19

You know how goes the custom of the Camp;
How swift the wooing where the pace is set
To live all in the hour—and then forget!
The midnight moon shone pale, like an onyx lamp
Hung in the amber twilight of the sky,
When we went forth together, she and I,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And open'd yellow wine, whose yellow stamp
Won high approval from the rascals dry
Who pledg'd us o'er and o'er, upon the chance
To waste in regions barbarous that vintage of old
France.

20

The first ones of the North still tell of it:
That was the night the Lucky Swede made bold
To bid for Beulah all her weight in gold;
And when, from mere caprice, my side she quit,
And challenged him to make the offer good,
With iron pans and a beam and a chunk of wood
A rough-and-ready balance soon was fit,
And the Swede brought up his gold where Beulah
stood,
And 'gainst her weight upon the other scale
He piled his buckskin-sacks, while I—saw red, but
watch'd the sale.

21

In all my life I never felt so broke;
But when the balance quiver'd evenly,
She threw a kiss to him—and came to me,
And my heart went all a-tremble as she spoke:
“Olè, you're a sport all right—for a Swede!
But I think this Sourdough here's the man I need;
I only play'd to leave him for a joke;
Let's call it off—and the drinks on me! Agreed?”
Since then for me there's been no other girl—
And all the boys shook hands on it, and things be-
gan to whirl.

22

And it's something worth, even in memory,
 To linger thro' those ample hours again.
 It may not be the same with other men,
 But clear on the topmost waves of revelry
 The soul of me was lifted cool and clean,
 Silent—to feel the surge of what had been:
 Content—to weigh the evil yet to be:—
 Then Beulah's arms closed warm and white be-
 tween,
 And I let go of all in her embrace,
 And for a time escaped from time and the latitudes
 of space.

23

And the last was a sense of sound—a tremulo,
 So vagrant, sweet and low, 'twas like the thin,
 Continual twinkling tune of a mandolin
 To mellow-toned guitars in Mexico,
 Where lovers pace the plaza by the sea;
 Where the deep Pacific phosphorescently
 Goes rolling smoothly 'neath the Moon, as tho'
 The influence of her yellow witchery
 Thro' all the sparkling waters off the Main
 Had sunken, sunken, drunken down like limitless
 champagne.

24

Slowly I woke. The last of the stars had fled:
 Only beside me Beulah murmur'd "Stay!"
 And kiss'd me, sleepy-eyed. But early day
 Chills all of that somehow; I turned instead,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Thinking to leave her dreaming, I confess;
Yet even in that grey light her loveliness,
And certain drowsy, dulcet words she said,
Charm'd my heart to hers in a last caress—
Chained if you like, and clinch'd with a parting
smile—

What then? In the round of the World I've found
naught else so well worth while.

25

Far up a valley, where the summer-rills
Long ages thro' the glacial-drift have roll'd,
I work'd in gravel studded thick with gold
For days and days on the double-shift that kills.
Yet oft, to hear the echoes ring and stir,
That vacant valley like a dulcimer,
I flung her name against the naked hills,
And crimson'd all the air with thoughts of her;
While 'mong the fair returning stars I'd see
Pale phantoms of her chill, sweet face receding
endlessly,

26

Till I could stand the pull of it no more;
I, who as a fool knew every phase
Of woman's lighter love, and love's light ways,
Had felt no passion like to this before.
As the lost drunkard's longing at its worst,
And keen as the craving of the opium-curst,
Was the elemental lust that overbore
My very body till it gasp'd athirst,
As one in some fierce desert dying dreams
Of snowy peaks and valleys green with unavailing
streams.

27

And Julien, good old Julien, knowing all,
 Pretended not to know, but said he guess'd
 That I had overwork'd myself, and best
 Lay off a spell in town. Then I let fall
 My useless tools, and wash'd and got in trim
 For the long ten miles ahead. The trail was slim,
 And crawl'd at times 'gainst some sheer granite
 wall,
 Or lost itself 'mong boulders huge and grim;
 But dreaming of her I pick'd a buoyant way,
 Descending easy to the Bar at ending of the day.

28

That region was abandon'd years ago,
 And Lonesome Bar is to the wild again,
 Yet still it haunts me as I saw it then:—
 Far up in the banner'd West a crimson glow,
 And a silver crescent on its edge aslant,
 With jewell'd Venus sinking jubilant
 Thro' opal spaces of the vault below;
 Then goblin rocks and waterfalls and scant
 Green tamarac around the white marquee
 Where Beulah lodg'd—and there was ending of the
 trail for me.

29

Ending of the trail—for she was there!
 Sylph-like I saw her figure thro' the haze
 Made of the twilight and the camp-fire blaze;
 And the piney odors passing thro' the air
 So pure I took for random kisses blown
 From her red mouth to mine, while yet unknown

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

My whereabouts; then wholly unaware
I stole upon her standing there alone,
And sudden she was mine without appeal,
And lip to lip within my arms made all my fancies
real.

30

Shall I forget the words she said to me?
Nay, I believ'd them—I believe them yet!
She told me how she dream'd that we had met
Where dreams are true; and then how endlessly,
Like some lost dove, she roamed this evil world
Seeking for me; how now her wings were furl'd,
And I should bide with her, till I should see
This whitest secret in her soul impearl'd;
And her songs were all for me, I heard her say,—
For me, for me and only me, forever and a day!

31

Then pass'd the last good hours I ever knew;
I lit my pipe, sat on a log, and look'd
At her and her neat hands that neatly cook'd
A supper hot and homely—just for two;
And out in God's sweet air, beside the fire,
Where comrade ways but strengthen'd Love's de-
sire,
We made it up to marry then for true,
And I thought how all my life I'd never tire
Of loving her, her eyes, her voice, her form,
Her charm of something unreveal'd for ever young
and warm.

32

But at last, as night drew on, she rose and said:
 "I'd talk with you till dawn, dear, if talk
 Could hold my audience or charm the clock,
 But I musn't miss my turn, so come ahead!"
 Down at the theatre the crowd was thin,
 Perhaps two score, no more, as we went in;
 But the manager was hanging out his red
 Big-letter'd signal-lantern to begin,
 When from the street, crescendo, came a roar,
 Nearer and still nearer, till it reach'd the dance-
 hall door.

33

Beulah stood ready on the stage, and the black
 Professor at the crack'd piano play'd
 His overture twice through, but no one stay'd,
 So I joined in where all were crowding back
 To where the row was on. "Speech, Mac, speech!"
 They cried, as up the aisle they rush'd to reach
 Where Beulah stood, confused. "It's Hellfire
 Mac!"
 I whisper'd her, "and he's drunk and wants to
 preach!"
 "What! why sure—whoever he is—come, dear,
 That lets me off for a while, you know; come on—
 . . . come on in here!"

34

And laughing softly she drew me aside
 Into a rough alcove, her dressing-room,
 Curtain'd from the stage, and half in gloom,
 When at a sound her eyes 'gan staring wide,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And she clutch'd my arm. 'Twas not the pious
drone,
But a fearsome something in the undertone
Of the ruin'd Calvinist, whose soul espied
Damnation toppling from the great White Throne
Upon the woeful habiter's of Earth,
That somehow check'd the crowd that night, and
still'd its shallow mirth.

35

And Beulah, more than all like one enthrall'd,
Smother'd a moan, and dumbly motioning
For me to follow, crept into the wing
Close up to him. Bearded, grey and bald,
With eyes sunk gleaming under beetling shag,
And face rough-chisel'd like a granite crag,
He tower'd above us all; but so appall'd
He seem'd that scarce his drunken tongue could
drag
Meet words to match his ghastly fantasies,
Yet I remember some in Gaelic accents drawn like
these:

36

"Last night, my friens, she dreamt she was a
snake,
Prodigious as wass nefer seen before:
Ha, ta Mac an Diaoul!—ta Peishta-Mor!
For when she moved she made ta mountains
quake,
And all ta waters of ta oceans roll

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

In frightnet waves from Pole to frozen Pole;
While efermore her starving body'd ache
So bitterly ta pain she couldna thole,
But twistit round and round, till she was curl'd
In endless coils of blastit flesh about ta blastit
World.

37

“For in those days she was ta only thing;
There wass no man nor woman left at all;
No fish to swim, no beast to run or crawl,
No bird nor butterfly to spread its wing;
Around ta world herself wass all alone,
For all that efer lived to her had grown;
And Winter, that would nefermore be Spring,
Now glowert silent ofer every zone:
Then liftit she her head into ta sky
To spit ta last great blasphemy into God's face—
and die.

38

“But O! ta silence of ta endless sky—
And O! ta blackness of ta endless Night!
Where all ta stars can nefer make it light—
Where in ta empty, like a Defil's eye,
Ta eerie Sun, grown small and smooth and cold,
Stared down upon her doom ordain'd of old!
And she torment—and she couldna tell for why—
With agonies in every quaking fold,
Where only flowit poison streams for blood:
And still she hiss'd and spit and curst—and still
there wass no God!

39

"But at ta last she felt ta power to make
 Ta great escape, and finish all her hurt;
 Ta Spirit moved her, and her body girt
 Its straining coils until ta World she brake
 To splinter'd rocks that ground and crash'd and
 roar'd,
 While all ta inner fires reek'd up and pour'd
 In fury round ta universal Snake—
 Consuming in ta vengeance of ta Lord!"
 We never heard the meaning of his dream,
 For sudden thro' the building rang a wild hysteric
 scream.

40

And Beulah springing frenzied to the stage,
 And the old man halting face to face with her,
 Too swift and strange for any theatre
 Follow'd a scene whose measure none could
 gauge,
 Only we felt its mad reality.
 "That man's my father—keep him back from me!"
 I heard her cry, while horror blent with rage
 Upon the other's face. "A fient I see!
 A damit fient of Hell, who stole my name!
 Beulah, ta harlot, come again to cross my face with
 shame!"

41

I saw the old man grip and throttle her;
 I saw her choking, and her white hand dart
 Down to the knife that flashed—and found his
 heart!
 I saw him reel and fall—I saw the blur

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Of blood that gush'd upon her heaving breast
Out of his own! Ah! God, how quick the rest!
Ere I or any one of us could stir,
Full to the hilt that fatal knife she press'd
Into her side, that ran and reek'd with red,
As she fell dead upon the stage where lay her
father dead.

42

Moments there are that gleam beyond all Time!
Blown from enormous Years! O name that seems
To hearken back thro' vague primeval dreams!
O maid remember'd from the young, sublime,
Untrammel'd days when God foregathered us!
My woman still—grown strangely perilous!
All in a moment marr'd with scarlet crime,
And lost before mine eyes incredulous!
My woman still—tho' I go babbling, dazed
At thought of her and her father damn'd, and a
Hell of things gone crazed!

43

How since that hour again and yet again
I've play'd the fool with Death! Go let him take
What shape he please, I'll meet him wide awake,
And keep a date with him—no matter when!
Mad, I tell you—mad, I've laughed to hear
In Winter-time the mad grey wolves draw near
And circle round me, all unarm'd—and then,
Snapping their teeth, slink back and howl with
fear:
God knows of what! So queer it seem'd, almost
I think they saw beside me there old Hellfire's
drunken ghost!

Lonesome Bar! Too far—too far and old
 The hollow sound of it now comes to me
 To quicken this sick heart that crazily
 Goes lurching on to everlasting cold!
 Fill up my glass! What game have I to play
 But drink into this drear, indifferent day,
 Some brief delirium, wherein to hold
 A phantom floating goldenly away
 Beyond the zenith of my soul, as bright
 Aurora with her dreamlight haunts the hopeless
 Arctic night!

1907.

CACTUS

I've wandered over Western plains where naught
 Of moving life will choose itself a home,
 Save creatures of grotesque or hateful breed,
 Rattlesnakes and hairy tarantulas,
 And red-rock lizards, with their kindred huge,
 The gila-monsters, whose envenom'd breath
 Shrivels the crawling centipede, they say,
 And curls in death the silent scorpion
 E'er he can sting, yet passes o'er unharm'd
 The horned toads that slumber 'mid the sands
 There glimmering hot beneath the rainless skies.

And yet upon those plains so desolate
 No spear of grass for any season comes,
 Where e'en the arid sage-brush ventures not,
 Those plants uncouth I've seen that clearly show
 Nor stem nor leaf, but structur'd all in one,
 Perennial grow in rooted shapes perverse
 As ever Dante dreamed or Doré drew.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Some tall as palms rear cloven pinnacles
Proudly through the torrid atmosphere;
And some like mimic reptiles spread and sprawl
Their prickly arms along the parched ground.
Some squat and round, and deckt with hoary hair,
Dwell hermit-like among the sunset rocks,
Or lean above the canyon's beetling verge,
Where down—sheer down a thousand feet below—
The twilight green is fleckt with pallid foam
Flung from the rapid Rio as it rolls
Between abysmal walls outrageously.

And thus in regions dry and damnable
They hold the juice of life, well armed about
With myriad thorns like bayonets at the charge,
Lest any luckless beast upon these wilds
From them should seek precarious sustenance.
And some do keep within themselves a cool
Sweet reservoir of waters, gathered up
In those brief seasons when relenting skies
Resolve at last the roaring thunder clouds
In sudden, unrestrained relief to rain.
But for them all there comes a time of bloom,
When their distorted bodies wake and thrill,
And feel within themselves a revelling
Of splendid passion culminate at last
In wealth of gorgeous blossoms. Nonchalant
They dance and flirt with every passing breeze,
And riot 'mid the spiny bayonets
Like odalisques, luxuriant to fill
With orient odor and high carnival
Those waste and unaccustom'd solitudes.

Some lift a scarlet glory to the sun,
While all day long their golden stamens swell

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

With velvet pollen, drifting o'er their mate
Until her last desire be satisfied.
Some, virgin-like, await the veiled hours
Of one long chosen eve, when pure and pale
With perfect rapture they at length unfold
Their loveliness beneath the Southern stars,
And all exhaust in one voluptuous night
The yearned-for bliss, perchance, of patient years.

E'en so, those quenchless, isolated sparks
Of that recurrent fire that men call Life
In such odd guise do there express themselves,
With virtues individual and rare.

In all that valiant fibre what's involved?
God knows! But surely Character, whose vim
Will hold thro' every shape that bodies it
In striving up the stony tracts of Time.

Let that be as it will! But I have known
Some fellows of my own so gifted with
A like persistent faith, they would extract
From circumstance to wither other hearts
A very elixir of faith and hope.

And so I call to mind an old-time friend:
A granite Presbyterian he was,
Of thorny doctrine and contracted creed,
Whose soul as in a desert pitiless
Dwelt far removed from pleasant ways of men,
Despair'd for deeds that he had never done,
And fear'd all things beneath the brassy skies
Foredoom'd unto inevitable Hell.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Yet there were times—we ne'er could tell for why—
When o'er his dour old face would fall a glint
Of sunny humor and of transient peace,
As if his straiten'd soul, in very stress
Of its own native sweetness, had put forth
Some fair quaint flower to bloom incongruous
Upon the barren branches of his faith.
E'en such a time it seem'd to me when once
In San Francisco, years ago, I stroll'd
With him along the water front and saw
A drunken sailor on a sudden halt
Before a wounded cur that yelping lay
Upon the road. No passer-by took heed,
But, muttering words of maudlin sympathy,
The sailor stoop'd unsteadily and caught
The mongrel creature in his arms. At once
It stopt its cries, and, in brute gratitude,
'Gan lick the fellow's foolish bearded face,
While he, flinging a customary curse or two
Upon the jeering urchins of the street,
Stagger'd from our sight with his new charge:
A homeless, worthless pair, whether they sought
The refuge of some dingy lodging house,
Or forecastle of some tramp merchantman,
Or tarry little schooner on the bay.

But my dour friend look'd after, as in doubt,
Bewilder'd to approve that nondescript
Haphazard deed whose vagrant influence
Yet warm'd his aged heart like rare good wine:
Then, smiling, murmur'd slowly to himself:
"Ah, Tam—I'm maybe thinkin', lad, that yon
Poor vagabond Samaritan and a'
Wee feckless dogs and daftlike sailormen
Maun no stop aye in Hell—nor no for long!"

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And tho' he said no more I felt the glow
Of white compassion that encompass'd him;
A radiance straight from some eternal shrine
Beyond the bounds of aught his creed confess'd.

I had another friend of different sort:
Gentle born and led in luxury
Thro' childhood's days, life open'd fair until
Death robb'd him of the friends he needed most,
And faithless guardians left him penniless.
Yet early for himself an envied place
Above the shrewd, competing throng he gain'd
On one great city's mart, where sweeps the tide
And traffic of her richest merchandise.
And if he dream'd of riches then his dreams
Were founded well. But other things he dream'd,
For in his blood was more than bargaining,
And he had soul too great to hold himself
Penurious on the road to mean success.

The days went by. And so it was that in
That rosy-vision'd time—the June of youth—
When all things beckon'd him, he thought he found
One woman's face more fair than all his dreams—
One woman's heart beyond the price of gold.
Alas! When to another's arms she went,
Loveless 'mid all lovely circumstance,
The star that lit the perfect way for him
Went darkly out, and from the waste of years
His promis'd happiness forever pass'd,
Like as a momentary, bright mirage
Pictur'd on an endless wilderness.
And tho' he went undaunted through all lands,
Grappling with a perverse destiny,
Everywhere the way to him was barr'd,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And everywhere he found a harder lot:
It seem'd as Fate a single vengeance wreak'd
On him for follies of a score of lives.
Yet when he came amongst us in the West,
Altho' his shaggy hair was streakt with grey,
He spoke like some fresh-hearted, plucky boy,
Ready for new adventure anywhere.
A surly, thwarted, hopeless set we were,
Stranded in that barren mining camp,
But soon for him we found a welcome place,
Won over by the wholesome, cheery way
He settled down to that rough life of ours.
He work'd with me a wasted season through
Upon the poorest claim of one poor creek,
With temper cool and even all the while,
And when I had no heart to sing he'd sing
And twang on his old banjo by the fire
To drive away the loneliness of night;
He had the knack somehow to make me feel
That any luck was good enough for us,
That with it all a man could be a man,
And come up smiling from the hardest blow
That Fate knew how to give. Poor old Jack!
We loved him for his sunny, careless ways,
And there was no better fellow in the West!
The fever 'twas that took him off at last,
And in the shifting sands we buried him.
We roll'd a boulder there to mark his grave,
And on it scrawl'd his name and when he died,
But made no show of service over him,
For there was no man of us could say a word.
Yet when the rest had gone I linger'd still,
And sat upon that old, striated stone
To stare in stolid mood against the West,
Wherein the ruddy Sun had sunken low:—

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Sat brooding on the tangle of our lives,
That seem so gone awry and objectless,
Till out of the wreck of unrelated things
One of the moments came that come to me
Drifting loose from Time, and wonderful
With alien fragrance and Elysian airs,
While absently I mutter'd words of him,
Witless for all I know—but no one knows:
“His drowsy spirit dreams of me,” I said,
“Among the outer glades of Paradise!”
And I arose, yet ere I went away,
Upon that grave, for lack of better thing,
I planted cactus for a covering.

THE CHILCOOT PASS

1

FAR up the Chilcoot Heights! The solid snow,
Avalanch'd from Titan peaks that rise
In stony isolation 'gainst the skies,
Hath whelm'd all in soundless overthrow;
And almost now the white and crusted mass
Hath choked the glacier's ghastly blue crevasse
That cleaves to everlasting cold below:
The wintry day declines; and down the Pass,
Where Time hath fallen, desolate, asleep,
To mark the flight of Arctic hours gigantic shadows
creep.

2

But see! Upon that perilous, meagre trail,
There winding upward to a dazzling crest,
A miner inward-bound on Fortune's quest!
And tho' the sunlight's slanting weak and pale,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Tho' in the livid clouds a tempest lours,
And far above him yet the Summit towers,
He sees therein no sight to make him quail;—
'Gainst any steep he'd pit his stubborn powers;
He goes, as dauntless men have gone of old,
To play with Death in a land unknown for a stake
of love and gold.

3

Steady he's toil'd for hours; at last he makes
A moment's pause to shift his heavy pack,
The twisted straps chafe sore upon his back,
And with hard travel all his body aches.
But now it is he notes with some dismay
What little measure's left him of the day,
And how the air's ablur with thin, white flakes;
Yet up the Pass he takes one quick survey,
Then grimly on he goes with hastening stride,
For he must be over the Summit by night—he will
sleep on the other side.

4

Let others lag; he'll on with the first of the
rush!
Down rivers roaring into deserts bleak,
He'll pioneer his way to the richest creek—
He'll cut and thaw the frozen earth—he'll crush
Its hoarded treasure out—and he'll call his
claim
“The Little Annie!” For him that simple name
Lights up a dream of home returning flush
With store of yellow gold and golden fame;
Bringing back the happy days once more
To a little girl left lonely on the lone Lake Erie
shore.

5

The gloom is deepening where the sunlight
 was;
 The flakes are falling faster now around;
 Far off he hears a shrill, foreboding sound,
 And at its challenge makes another pause.
 Awhile irresolute, with anxious eye,
 He gazes at the menace of the sky,
 And from its hue reluctant warning draws:
 The storm is nigh—he little dreams how nigh—
 When cursing his labor lost he turns to go
 Down again for shelter to the cabin far below.

6

Save your curses, man! You walk o'erbold!
 You go too slow and sullen down that path!
 You may not live and brave the coming wrath
 In those tumultuous clouds above you roll'd!
 Save your curses, man!—for now you'll need
 Every breath your body has for speed;
 E'en now the air is struck with deathlier cold;
 E'en now the foremost furious winds are freed;
 Look!—look above you there at last,
 And see the Heavens whirling downward, vague
 and white and vast!

7

So—he knows!—too late, alas, he knows
 His fierce pursuers, and with desperate leap
 Goes plunging madly down the uncertain
 steep—
 Down for his life! Frantic now, he throws

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

His dragging pack away—his senses swim
With swift descent—the storm's o'ertaking
him—
The drift in stinging clouds around him blows
To make him gasp and choke—his eyes grow
dim—
Unto his very bones the cold he feels;—
But down and down that fatal Pass, tho' dazed he
leaps and reels!

8

Far up the Chilcoat Heights! The storm is on:
He's struggling still, but now he's lost the trail,
And all his sturdy muscles flag and fail,
'Mid swirling snow, to shapes fantastic drawn
That pass like endless fleeing ghosts; and each,
In passing, seems to hiss at him and reach
Long throttling fingers out; sight is gone,
For his eyes see only white; hark! the screech
Of Arctic winds swift leaping from the sky
Down like the souls of famish'd wolves—"O Annie,
lass!—good-bye!

9

"For now I'm play'd right out—I'm freezing
fast—
I'm on the spot where I'll for ever lie,
Just when I thought my chance had come—
good-bye!
Good-bye! my life is over now and past!
And it's been no use, tho' I've tried everywhere
To do the best I could, and do it square,
God's kept his grudge against me to the last,
And I've stood it low so long, I hardly care!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Let Him finish me up, right here, if He likes,
and hurl
What's left of me to Hell!—But you!— O Annie—
my orphan girl!"

10

White, white, white—all 'round 'tis white—
Blind white and cold;—unheard is hurl'd
His last appeal 'gainst this relentless World:
No rescue now may come—no swift respite:
The minutes of his life are almost o'er.
He knows it well;—see, he moves no more!
Body and soul can make no further fight,
Bewilder'd in the blizzard's maddening roar;
But he's facing it—he's standing rigid there—
Defying Heaven's utmost wrath in reason-rack'd
despair!

11

"Blow, then, damn you—blow! You've taken all!
You—whatever Thing you are that hears—
You've never once let up on me for years!
You've stript me stark and bare as a wooden
doll!
And there's not a rag of comfort left! You've
blown
Every joy and every hope I've known
Roughly from my life! And when I fall,
You'll howl above me, dying here alone!
Pile on—pile on, with your blasted, strangling
snow!
You can take no more but my life now! Blow!
God damn you—blow!"

12

White, white, white,—unceasing white!
 See! he totters, yielding to his doom—
 The snow hath ready made his shroud and
 tomb:
 But what is that? There breaks a sudden light
 That startles him to last delirious cries;—
 Pinnaced athwart the awful skies,
 Behold a treasure-lode, uncovered bright
 In transient glory to his dying eyes!
 On a towering peak the sunset clouds unroll'd,
 And he's gasping at the cruel splendor—"Gold—
 gold—gold!"

13

Far up the Chilcoat Heights! A prostrate form,
 Half-buried now and motionless, doth lie
 All free of pain—and, happily, to die.
 Listen! He's muttering thro' the passing storm:
 "Home again, Annie—home again!
 God! but it's restful—after that rattling train!
 It's all so still and sunny here—and so warm!
 How was it I came so soon? I can't explain—
 Only I know I'm home; and O! it seems
 Too good to be true! Doesn't it, lass? And it's
 finer than all my dreams!

14

"You've grown so pretty since I've been away—
 So tall and pretty—I almost seem to see
 Your mother smiling there again at me,
 Just like she look'd upon her wedding-day!—

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

A year before they laid her 'neath the grass,
And left me only you, my little lass!
Come closer to me—things grow dull and
grey;—

My eyes were hurt in a blizzard on the Pass
The year I went away and left you, Pet!
What's making it dark so early, Annie? Surely
it's not night yet?

15

"O! well—no matter! Whatever time it be,
I'm one of the lucky ones, I've made my pile,
And I'm going to take it easy for awhile.
No more work or worry now for me;
I've lots of gold—as yellow as your curls;
And I'll dress you fine again like the other
girls,

And get you everything you want—you'll see!
A ring like mother had—and a collar of
pearls;—

And I'll buy—I'll buy the old home back—
that they sold!

But it's made your daddy old, dear—it's made him
feel so old!

16

"Yes, I hear you laughing at me now!
But O! it's good to hear you laugh again!
To have you near and have you laugh—and
then,

I must look kind of funny, I'll allow;
These clothes of mine are all so patch'd and
queer!

But I'll have better ones to-morrow, dear;—

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And I know you love your old dad, anyhow!
I feel so tired, I think I'll sleep just here:—
Kiss me, Annie!—there—good-night, my lass!"
God rest the souls of the dead who lie on the
Heights of the Chilcoot Pass!
1898.

FOR THE CROWNING OF THE KING

AN ODE

1

YE sovran Stars! that in the deep
Of endless Night your courses keep,
 'Twas said of old
 That ye do hold
A mystic rein o'er human destinies!
That from the vast, exultant sweep
 Of your Eonian harmonies,
 Fateful thro' ethereal seas
 Enrhyth'm'd cycles flow,
 Whose subtle volume sways
 The tide of nether days
 Forever 'tween the goals of weal and
 woe!
I am not vers'd in Magian mysteries,
 Nor dim, Chaldean lore—
Arcturus and the pallid Pleiades
I see as any peasant sees,
 Jewelling Heaven's floor—
Yet on the coronation morn
 Of him who is our ruler now,
 With simple heart would I implore

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

That only sweetest influences
From out the skies be borne!*
O may no orb of red disaster fling
Malefic rays to mar a monarch's brow!
Shine out! Shine out, ye Stars of joy, and bring
A benison of peace upon the crowning of our King!

2

Rise golden for the glorious day,
O golden Sun!
Blow, ye Winds! and waft away
What clouds in envious array
Would frown upon a reign so well begun!
O shining One!
This day thy rounded skies shall ring
With sound of Britons gathering,—
And every Zone shall hear them sing
God save the King!

3

No despot on a guarded throne
Will Britons own!
No crafty council of the chosen few,
Such as the old Republics knew,
Such as made proud Venice groan,
Shall e'er undo
Our long-descended liberty!
No oligarchy, rich with spoil
Of others' wealth and others' toil,
Nor yet the whim of mere majority,
That substitution for old tyranny,
However it be term'd,

*"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades!"—Job.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Shall wrest from us what Magna Charta gave,
And our first Edward's hand and seal confirm'd!
Behold! Around the World the royal standards
 wave!
And yet in all our scatter'd States
 The humblest Briton—nay,
The lowliest stranger that's within our Gates,
 In open day
 May say the thing that he would say,
And work and worship without let in his own
 chosen way!

4

Outcast,
Forgotten tribes, in ages past,
As by some direful tempest tossed,
Were scatter'd wide, and long 'mid alien nations
 lost,
By plagues cut off, by foes harassed,
Yet thro' all change of time and place,
 While kingdoms rose, and kingdoms fell,
 And mighty empires moulder'd to decay,
In all those tribes a saving trace
 Of pride and faith invincible
Bespoke the instinct of a chosen race.
 At last
 There came a day
As if a dim-remember'd Voice were calling them
 away.
 Then in the weakest exile's breast
 'Gan burn a fever of unrest,—
March on! March on! went up the cry
As every morn they struck their tents

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

To journey with the Sun and seek the West,—
 They knew not why;
But thus did their wandering recommence,
Inspir'd by one o'ershadowing Influence!
 From tracts where still the savage Tartar
 roves,
Beyond where Caspian's bitter waters spread,
From regions of the old Egyptian dead,
 Or thro' Iberian orange-groves;—
 On Northern seas, or lost among
 Germanic forests' dark defiles,
 Of varied creed and divers tongue,
All unwitting, tribe by tribe were led
Thro' legendary years to their predestin'd Isles.
 Let History tell
 What things thereafter in those Isles be-
 fell!
 Isolate by wrathful seas,
How clan and tribe together fought
With eager rage thro' iron centuries!
 How still they wrought
Their rugged characters to a rough ideal
Of equity and courage! How from it all
 Some inkling of their destiny,
 And their essential unity,
Did weld them into loyal peace at last!
How slowly as the years went past,
 And still with vague intent,
The corner-stone of empire square was laid
By scholar's pen, by warrior's blade,
 By wisdom of free Parliament,—
By noble deed of every class,
With steadfastness of that God-fearing mass
 Whose name no records now recall,—
 Freemen all!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Whether they dwelt in ploughman's hut or grey
baronial hall.

Then, fired once more with the will to roam,
The younger sons forsook their Island home;

They set their sails for every breeze,
Their gallant vessels cut the foam
Of unfamiliar seas,

Till every port their daring ensigns knew,
And traffic'd or fought on every coast some roving
British crew.

No need to tell

How now they dwell

In every zone invincible!

How 'tis their boast around the World,

Where'er their banners are unfurled,

Essential as the very breath they draw,

To 'stablish fast from age to age

The Briton's glorious heritage,

The deep instinct of Liberty—the vigor of the
Law!

5

Way for the King!

Down Westminster's glorious aisle

With blare of trumpets, roll of drums,

And sound of organs thundering,

On the royal pageant comes

In stately ancient order, while

All the pride of three old Kingdoms

Follows after—wondering!

O splendid Hour!

See knights and dames of cherished Chivalry,

With ermine deckt, with plumes atoss,

And coronets ablaze,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And every quaint device that Heraldry
Can broider or emboss,

To bring again a dream of Gothic days,
In right of old assurance standing forth!

But, eloquent of vaster power,
See notable 'mid these,

The chieftains of the Empire over Seas!
Here from the white Dominion of the North,
And there from late-embattl'd Africa!
Here the gallants of the Southern Cross,
With those that rule in jewell'd India!
See them thronging, hushed and dense,
Between the storied walls from whence

The marble images of men look down
Who wrought the Empire's eminence!
Hail to thee, Edward! Kneel for the crown
Worn by the Mother-Queen, whose pure renown
Won every nation's reverence!

Hail to thee, Edward! Mount the throne!

That venerable chair

Whose carven oak, so legends old declare,
Enshrines the very stone

That pillow'd Jacob's head, when far alone
On Bethel plain his dreaming eyes
Beheld a shining ladder rise

In glorious portent to the skies.

Treasur'd long thro' patriarchal days,

As pledge of grandeur yet in store,
That stone was borne by devious ways

At last to Erin's shore;

And thus safe-kept thro' all its wanderings,

Lo! Ireland's, Scotland's, England's kings,

And kings that be all three,

Thereon in long ascendant line shew forth that
dream and prophecy!

Keen be thy sword, O King!
 Sternly thy peace maintain!
 That he who sails the wave, and he who tills
 the soil,
 And all who win their bread by honest toil,
 May fear no foeman's ravening
 Thro' all thy wide domain!
 Far off from us be that most fatal hour
 When guardian hands grow lax from long un-
 challenged power!
 For man hath still a wolfish mind,
 Ensway'd of greed and lust;
 And still o'er all the Earth we find
 No nation weaponless may trust
 The justice of mankind.
 Keen be thy sword, O King!
 Then Faith, secure from bigot's rage, shall
 flower
 In every form that listeth her, and Art,
 O'er seven seas awakening,
 From her ethereal treasury shall dower
 Thy throne with gifts of new and golden fashioning!
 Untrammel'd Science, on her endless quest,
 Shall march beneath thy standard's shadow-
 ing,
 Shall add to life unwonted zest,
 And wizard powers now all unguessed
 To man impart!
 O King!
 Whate'er we did in days of yore,
 Our greatest work lies yet before!
 Be thine to keep the Empire's heart
 Sound at the core!

7

So shall we sing
 God save the King!
 God guard his realms wide!
 For him be happy years in store
 With that sweet Consort by his side,
 Whose beauty Time hath lingered o'er—
 But courtéous left untried!
 O'ershadow them in all their ways,
 And still, O God, if parlous days
 Should come beyond the ken
 Of King and Prince and Councillors,
 And all the Empire's Senators,
 As in time past be Thou again
 Our trusted Guide!
 And on us all be blessings multiplied
 E'en as thou wilt! Amen!

1902.

ON BEACON HILL

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1

PRONE on a grassy knoll where runs the sea
 In from the North Pacific, deep and blue,
 Whose tide-ript waters many a century
 But parted for the painted war-canoe,
 Till Juan de Fuca and his swarthy crew
 Sail'd on a treasure cruise to regions cold,
 Idle I dream'd a summer evening through,
 Watching the ruddy Western Sun enfold
 The snowy-peaked Olympians in transient gold.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

2

Our air hath yet some tang of Spanish days,
Some glow of stories fading from the past
Of pioneers, and wreckt and curious strays
From distant lands along this coast up-cast,
Since brave Vancouver, from his eager mast,
Beheld the island of his lasting fame,
And, veering to its pleasant shore, made fast
To raise our flag in George's royal name,
While group'd around his brawny tars gave loud
acclaim.

3

Across the rocky harbor-mouth still fall
Echoes to tell of England's easy crown,
And timely bugles from the barracks call
A challenge to the careless little town
That lies like a pretty maid in tatter'd gown
'Mid tangled gardens, tempting one to halt
Where gnarled oaks, with ivy overgrown,
Are all accord with her one charming fault—
So drowsy nigh the hidden guns of Esquimalt.

4

And nonchalant lay I that afternoon,
The air a scent of wild white-clover bore,
And I could hear the tumult and the tune
Of tumbling waves along the pebbled shore;
Such gipsy joys to me were ever more
Than chase of gold or fame; but yet withal
I felt the first fine tremor o'er and o'er
Of some vast traffic without interval
To traverse soon these waterways imperial.

5

Where now some tug-boat leaves a smoky trail
 To pencil on the air a coiling blot
 Athwart the lighthouse, or the infrequent sail
 Of some slow lumber-bark, or vagrant yacht,—
 Where glides some British cruiser, grimly
 wrought,
 Beside the schooners from the Bering seas,—
 To largely feed the crowded world methought
 Here soon shall pass great annual argosies
 Full-freighted with the yield of prairie granaries.

6

And musing thus upon that gentle mound,
 Far down the reach of waters to the right
 I saw an Empress liner inward bound,
 Speeding thro' the Narrows, trim and white,
 And every moment growing on my sight,
 Like something clear unfolding in a dream;
 Her very motion was a clean delight,
 That woke the sapphire sea to curl and cream
 Smoothly off her curving prow and snowy beam.

7

And easily as up the Straits she roll'd,
 My fancy rambled over her to see,
 Bulging richly 'gainst her steely hold,
 Bales of flossy silk stow'd solidly
 With matted rice and tons of fragrant tea;
 Or else, her quainter cargo fain to scan,
 Wee China toys in silver filagree,
 And cunning ivories of old Japan,
 Pack'd with iris-woven rugs from Ispahan.

8

All hail to her! the white forerunner sent
 From out the lavish West to rouse the old
 Lethargic portals of the Orient,
 Till all its stolid habitants be told
 Of quick new modes of life, and manifold
 Swift engines of exchange, and how by these
 To run their times within a finer mould,
 And from the rut of Chinese centuries
 To reach for wider joys and soother luxuries.

9

O sure it is no small thing to be said
 That under us the East and West have met!
 And our red route shall yet be perfected
 Around the World, and our old flag shall yet
 Much vantage o'er its younger rivals get,
 Whether it wave from Windsor's kingly pile,
 Or on the farthest verge of Empire set,
 'Bove fearless towns, whose heart-strings all
 the while
 Shall thrill to every chord from their old Mother-
 isle.

10

We feel the centre now, where'er we stand,
 And touch community in everything,
 Since Science, with her patient, subtle hand,
 Hath snar'd the Globe as in a witch's ring,
 And set all elements a-quivering
 To our desire. What marvels more she'll
 show—

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

What new delights from Nature conjuring—
Small wit have I to guess, but this I know,
That more and more the scattered World as one
must grow.

11

Then closer blend for empire—that is power:
No thing of worth e'er came of feebleness,
And union is the genius of the hour.
The virtues that by master-craft and stress
Wrought hugely on primeval palaces,
And 'stonish'd Egypt and great Babylon
With monuments of admirable excess,
Seem once again from out Oblivion drawn
To lighten o'er the Earth in unexampl'd dawn.

12

We front the threshold of a giant age,
Foremost still, but others follow fast;
We may not trust o'ermuch the written page,
Or measure with the measures of the past.
For all our millions, and our regions vast,
And arm'd array, in boastful numbers told,
To keep the treasures that our sires amass'd,
Hath need of statesmen lion-like to hold,
And still forestall the changing times alert and
bold.

13

The impulse of a thousand centuries
Strikes upward now in our united race.
Not for a Roman triumph, but to ease
The intercourse of nations and to place

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

The social fabric on a happier base;
The very enginry of war abhorr'd,
So soon as may, is bended to erase
The stain and bloody ravage of the sword;
The vanquish'd now are all to equal right restor'd.

14

But cry contempt upon that sickly creed
That would not fire a shot to save its own,
Whose piety perverse doth only feed
The hope of leaner nations, bolder grown,
To tread the path that we have hewn alone:
'Twas not for them we found that path so
hard—
'Twas not for them the Earth so thick was sown
With British dead! Nay, rather let us guard
The barest rock that flies our flag at all hazard.

15

And e'en for the sake of rich and plenteous
peace,
Let mastery in arms be honor'd still!
So only shall the fear of foemen cease.
For this is naked truth, say what they will,
That when a people lose the power to kill
They count for naught among the sons of men;
Nor tongue, nor pen, nor art, nor workmen's
skill
Can save their homes from alien ravish then,
Or lift their fallen capitols to place again.

16

Then give us rifles—rifles everywhere—
 Ready rifles, tipt with bayonets!
 And men of iron to lead, who little care
 For parlor tactics or for social sets;
 Red captains worthy of their epaulets;
 Not rich men's sons to make a passing show,
 Lace-loving fops or wooden martinets,
 But clear-eyed stalwarts o'er the ranks, who
 know
 How best to train a naval gun or trap a foe.

17

And tho' the burden and the fret of life
 Still wear upon us with unequal weight,
 We'll ne'er give way to fratricidal strife.
 We are a people strong to tolerate,
 Till form'd opinion tranquilly abate
 Entrenched abuses of an earlier age,
 Rather than, impatient, emulate
 Those hapless nations that in sudden rage
 Of revolution wreck their ancient heritage.

18

Our Saxon temper, that 'gainst Church and
 Crown,
 And tyrant Castles of the feudal plan,
 Made steady way until it wore them down,
 And widen'd all their maxims till they ran
 Current for the right of every man
 Freely to change his state and circumstance,
 Is verile yet unbrokenly to span
 What gulf ahead, what unforeseen mischance,
 Would threat the front of our magnificent advance.

19

And we have those whose dreams of better-
ment
Outrun their fleeting day; whose hearts' ideal
Beat evermore against discouragement,
In high endeavor not to cease till all
The bars to opportunity shall fall
Within the Union of the British bred;
Nor rest content until the mutual
Machinery of State be perfected,
So that no least of all our brethren go unfed.

20

I never saw Britannia carved in stone,
Or figured out in bronze, but loyally
I've thought what merit shall be all her own
In that great Brotherhood that's yet to be—
The crystal Empire of Futurity—
Whose equal citizens, all thron'd elate,
And treading each a sovran destiny,
Shall count it yet their pride and best estate
To steadily for commonwealth co-operate.

21

Who'd be the bard of that triumphant time?
Who hath the pen of promise, and the skill,
To tell its periods in exultant rhyme?
For I am but a dreamer on a hill,
And fain withal fantastic hours to fill
With fancies running wild of thought, or gloat
Eerie on the rising Moon, until
Betimes I hear her dim, harmonic note—
Boding of forbidden things and themes remote.

But so a passing ship—a bugle call—
 Did tempt me to essay a song of State
 Beyond the range of my poor art, as all
 You rank'd Olympians, that loom serrate
 Against the azure upper air, are great
 O'er this low hill. To them young Morning
 throws

His golden first largesse—there, lingering late,
 Rose-mantled Eve her deep allegiance shows,
 Glorious 'mid unconquer'd peaks and virgin snows.

1901.

COQUITLAM

How oft I'd steal away, in hot July,
 At early dawn, thro' dell and over hill,
 To hear at last Coquitlam's purring rill!—
 To whip the riffles with some gaudy fly,
 And tempt the leaping trout, alert and shy!
 Munching a bit of chocolate to still
 My hunger, as the day grew long, until
 The Sun was shining low upon the sky.

Then, proudly, with the fish that I had caught,
 Go trudging home for many a weary mile,
 Full certain of a mother's welcome smile,
 And that she'd choose the best that I had got,
 And bid me tell her all about it, while
 'Twas cook'd up for my supper smoking hot.

OCTOBER

WHEN I was a little fellow, long ago,
The season of all seasons seemed to me
The Summer's afterglow and fantasy—
The red October of Ontario:
To ramble unrestrain'd where maples grow
Thick-set with butternut and hickory,
And be the while companion'd airily
By elfin things a child alone may know!

And how with mugs of cider, sweet and mellow,
And block and hammer for the gather'd store
Of toothsome nuts, we'd lie around before
The fire at nights, and hear the old folks tell o'
Red Indians and bears, and the Yankee war—
Long ago, when I was a little fellow!

THE VETERAN

ONE good old friend I had in boyhood's days,
Who far and wide about the World had been—
Had battles fought, and sieged cities seen,
And met adventure in a thousand ways,
That oft he told to me, in homely phrase,
Haphazard, like his careless heart, but clean:
It seem'd to ease the pains that rack'd him keen
To be the hero of my childish plays.

And when they put the old man in his grave,
I mind I stood beside—but did not see:
For thro' a blur of tears there came to me
A vision as of sunlight, and a brave
Awaken'd soul outsailing cheerily—
Uplift upon a wondrous azure wave.

THAT OTHER ONE

1

I USED to go to Sunday-school ;
When I was a little boy;
I said my catechism pat
About the wrath to come—and that
And holy kinds of joy;
For my pretty teacher told me sure
If I didn't learn it well
God some day would stick me down
In a red-hot hole in Hell.

2

I used to think if God were dead
How glad the World would be!
How all the solemn angels, up
Where gold counts less than a buttercup
Beside the Jasper Sea,
Would quit their endless psalm-singing
And chuck their harps away!—
And never a lonesome cherub would cry
Upon God's funeral day!

3

I felt there was some Other One,
Who'd watch and keep it right
For all the living things that are
From grass and flowers to the farthest star,—
star,—
Just Whom I knew not quite:
But someone like my Grandmother,
Too kind to give a rip
Whether I went to Sunday-school
Or off on a fishing trip.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

4

Who'd leave the Gates of Hell unlock'd
So the devils could all crawl out;
And the burning ghosts and the goblins too—
I often wonder'd what they'd do
If they could look about
And see the trees and the Sun again,
And feel the wind go by,—
I used to think those aching things
Would be so glad they'd cry.

5

Some One who'd fix old Eden up
For us as good as new;
And never would be jealous of
Our silly souls if we should love
A Golden Calf or two;
And there wouldn't be any Forbidden Tree;
But if anything went wrong
We'd fight it out among ourselves
Till we learned to get along.

6

"When I was a child I thought as a child"—
E'en so, good Father Paul!
But more and more it seems to me
That some of the things that children see
Are the truest, after all.
And e'en as a baby infidel
This pearl of faith I won,
And still I rest content therewith—
God is that Other One.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

TO WALT WHITMAN

1

HELLO there, Walt!
Out of sight on the old Highway
I hear your song:
I hear the words that you have said for me:
I, a sayer of words, sing out hello to you:
And you are not so very far ahead but you will
hear my words also.

2

Words, Walt, words!
Your words, anybody's words, and the words of the
rolling worlds!
But under all the one Word never uttered.

3

O comrade mine!
Accepting all, eager for all, taking no denial!
Good-will shines in you, through you, from you,
Splendid as the sun!

4

O eagle-eyed! O Titan-heart!
I look with you to the heights of old philosophies:
Looking above and beyond them, shouting ahoy
To wonders weaving out of Wonder endless in the
still Eterne!

5

But mostly, Walt,
 I watch you saunter down with huge, rejicing
 tread,
 Tramping America:
 Noting New York and its enormity:
 Swinging an axe in the Oregon forests:
 Bellowing songs to the sea.

6

Your catalogs I read unedified:
 Your lines that lumber humorless as Jewish genea-
 logy:
 Your divine average is not divine:
 And for all your rant and brag about your States,
 who cares?
 But the coming of the lilacs, Walt,
 And the call of mating birds,
 And the smell of June, with its berries,
 And the feel of the harvest air,
 And supple-bodied youth, and clean red blood, and
 the ripe, white quiver of the grown girl's breast,
 And all the easy, common joys of life to be had for
 the asking,
 The beautiful, bountiful flow of things in every
 land:
 Simple, copious, unrestrained forever:
 The sky and the stars and the winds of God, and
 the lovely faces behind the masque of Death:—
 For chanting these my hat goes off to you,
 Old stalwart out of days primeval,
 Earth-born and generous!

7

Down South:
 And the tide is coming in:
 I watch you fishing from the edge of the old dock:
 And a darky sitting by you in the sunshine:
 I listen to your lazy chat:
 Careless there, happy, smoking a corn-cob pipe:
 Blowing blue incense up to the round blue sky:
 Breathing the absolute now.

8

O but the Ocean played great tunes for you in
 octaves run too deep
 For your dull-eared compatriots to hear!

9

I tell you, Walt,
 This world lies sick for want of men like you!
 Resistent, unconforming, singular,
 Against the moulding and compression of the
 average:
 Against the drag to the level, and the blather-
 skite commune.

10

Here's to you, Walt!
 To you, and all good tramps of Adam following!
 Singing at sun-up through the morning air,
 Free of all stifling unions,
 Striking the trail of the great companions,
 Forever on their own!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

THE RHYME OF JAQUES VALBEAU

1

ONE August afternoon I saw,
Somewhere back of Ottawa,
 Among the oldest hills,
A young and most alluring squaw,
Togg'd in a buckskin petticoat,
 With buckskin fringe and frills:
Catamount-claws were at her throat,
 Fixt on a catgut string,
With copper beads and color'd quills,—
 O she was the dreamliest thing!
Clean and cool as the dews that cling
To the tiger-lilies on those hills
 Thro' the golden August dawns;
For the rest—the sunlight gleam'd
On breasts and arms and legs that seemed
Moulded brownly out of bronze:
Shapely, slender, debonair,
From her coils of blue-black hair
To her dainty moccasins:
And I met her, for my sins,
Somewhere back of Ottawa,
 Among the oldest hills.

2

Long ago in the earlies
A Frenchman lived in France:
Gaunt he was like an eagle,
With an evil, eagle glance:
One eye was black and one was blue,
And the black one look'd straight into you,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

While the blue one leer'd askance,
Most sinfully in Paris.
But it was wiser not to try
To hinder him or harass,
But quietly to pass him by,
In the sinful streets of Paris;
For his arm was strong, and his sword was long,
And when he made sword-plays,
'Twas hard to look him in the eye,
Because he look'd two ways;
The black one look'd straight into you,
And the blue one where he'd pink you through,
And that was a trick entirely new
To people then in Paris.
O he had small fears of the musketeers
Or the macaroons of Paris!
And he had his time, and he made most free,
And he lived in great ribalderie,
In the sinful streets of Paris.
But at last those evil eyes in his head
On whom they fell, or so 'tis said,
Brought such annoy and harass,
That when King Louis heard of it,
He order'd him from Paris:
Yes; not for the evil life he led,
Nor the ways that he walk'd unfit,
But for those two evil eyes in his head,
They press'd him out of Paris.

3

'Twas long ago in the earlies,
And he thought to take a chance
For fortune in the fur-trade,
So he sail'd away from France,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

In a crooked ship, with a crooked deck,
That sprang a leak and went to wreck
Five hundred miles from our Quebec,
At the mouth of our Saint Lawrence.
How then he fared I do not know,
'Twas long ago, but this is so,
That up the river, paddling slow,
Half-starv'd, at length he reach'd Quebec,
And told his tale of dismal wreck,—
His name was Jacques Valbeau.
Now in those days in our Quebec
Nigh all the folk were pious,
And when they saw his one black eye,
With the blue one on the bias,
They cross'd themselves, and wish'd the rogue
Had drown'd 'tween there and Paris.
Yet money is made in the fur-trade,
When others hunt the fur,
And some thought best that they should test
This lank adventurer;
And so they offer'd to subscribe
Enough to outfit and equip
Jacques Valbeau for a hunting trip
With some of the Huron tribe.
Thus did he go, this Jacques Valbeau,
And for many days he studied the ways
And the words of the Huron tribe.

4

Yes; money is made in the fur-trade
When others hunt the fur,
But brandy to the Indians
If you want the best of fur,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And everything else they have to show;
'Tis a law you know, and Jacques Valbeau
Was its discoverer.
So for many days he studied the ways
And words of every tribe.
Of money had he not a sou markee,
But he carried a bottled bribe,
And the Moon turn'd round, and he prosper'd some,
With beaver-skins and such,
That he got for his brandy, and then for rum,
And the gin of the heretic Dutch.
But me it would take too long to describe
How things went bad in every tribe
Which the Church had held in check;
But sure there was trouble plenty too much
In our dear old Quebec.
So the Bishop and the Governor,
Who sometimes did agree,
They met and talk'd the matter o'er,
And settled finally
That they would have this Jacques Valbeau
And hang him by the neck
Up on the windy citadel
Of our dear old Quebec.
But so it is, and so it is,
And one can never tell,
For in the Garden Ursuline
That evil-eyed Valbeau had seen
An Indian girl turned seventeen,
A sweet young sauvagesse,
Left with the Lady Prioress
To learn to sew, and cook nice food,
And tell her beads, and to confess,
And otherwise be good.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

But Jacques Valbeau, that Jacques Valbeau,
He signall'd her so well
In forest ways she understood,
That just at vesper-bell
Of that same evening long ago
She slipt away into the wood:—
O wicked Jacques Valbeau!

5

So Jacques took to the wilderness,
The first coureur-de-bois,
And with him went that Indian girl,
Whose convent-name was Lottilà—
With the accent on the "aw."
I have heard her other name, but now
I will not try to tell it,
Because I can't, and 'cause there are
No letters that will spell it.
But O, 'twas the good, good time they had
Thro' the woods in the summer weather!
Hunting and fishing and trading in furs,
And they were so rich together,
Until one night as they lay asleep,
Where the moss was growing thick and deep,
'Gainst the trunk of a fallen tree,
The Iroquois Indians silently
Began to creep and creep
In a closing circle where they lay,
Till scarce they were more than three yards away.
Then a twig did snap with a warning crack;
Upsprang that valiant rover, Jacques,
All in an instant wide awake,
And three of those Iroquois heads did break
Before they had him down. Alack!

They tied his hands behind his back
 And fixt him to a stake;
 And his bottles of Jamaica rum
 They drank till they were drunk.
 And then the squaws began to plunk
 With rattly sticks on the big tum-tum,
 That's a sort of Indian drum,
 And the braves a ring did make
 And danced around him at that stake
 The while the squaws did squawk;
 They danced around him at that stake,
 With painted cheek and feathered head,
 Each swinging a horrible tomahawk
 And gum-stick burning red,
 And told him how his scalp they'd take,
 And otherwise keep him awake
 Until the hungry day should break,
 Then cut him into blocks
 And finally his body bake,
 When sure that it no more could ache,
 And eat his heart when he was dead:
 Of these details perhaps I've said
 Too much—the subject shocks.

6

But so it is, and so it is,
 And one can never tell;
 For on Valbeau the flesh did sizz,
 And he began to yell,
 When the Devil, moving mightily
 Somewhere down in Hell,
 Did cause a terrible earthquake,
 And all of Canada did shake
 From Ottawa to Rimouski.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

(This happen'd in sixteen sixty-three,
And it's all set out in history).
But Jacques Valbeau stood swarthily,
And desperate at the stake,
And called the Devil to his aid,
While all the Indians, dismay'd,
Took to their naked knees and pray'd,
And the ground kept heaving heavily.
Yes, all took to their knees and pray'd,
But Lottilà, the little squaw,
Who, with no thought but her lover's life,
Cut thro' his thongs with a scalping-knife,
While the ground kept heaving heavily.
And then was that great bargain made
As Jacques Valbeau stood swarthily;
He call'd the Devil to his aid,
And the Devil, moving mightily
Somewhere down in Hell,
Roar'd reply, so I am told,
That Jacques Valbeau, the overbold,
And Lottilà as well,
If they would do his will alway,
Should laugh at Time and never grow old,
And none should hinder them or check,
Whether at work or whether at play,
Free to come and free to go
Thro' all the Province of Quebec
And the borders of Ontario—
Down to the Judgment Day!

7

Then Jacques Valbeau and Lottilà,
So the Iroquois declare
(And I have cause to think 'tis true),
While others crouch'd all in despair,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Follow'd a ball of fire that ran
Down to the river near St. Anne,
Till it stopt by a big canoe;
And Lottilà she fainted there,
And fell in that big canoe,
And Jacques, half dead, he fell there too.
Then it rose of itself in the spectral air,
And far out of sight it flew.
How long it was they never knew,
It may have been days, but Jacques came to,
And found they were still in the big canoe,
Hovering over a landscape fair,
Late in the afternoon.
And it floated aimless, here and there,
But Jacques Valbeau had ready wit,
And he sat and consider'd the matter a bit,
Till with a paddle soon
He caught the trick of sailing it,
Slowly at first and cautiously,
But at last he sail'd as joyously
As any bird on the wing;
While Lottilà woke up to sing
To the end of the afternoon.
Then a down-worn mountain they did see,
From whose green covering
The granite ribs sagg'd outwardly;
It seem'd some monstrous ancient thing
Crouching wearily.
But on its summit they did light,
And make their camp there for the night;
In later days, upon that site,
But lower down the hill,
Jacques built a cabin large and strong,
And near to it a whiskey-still
To make the whiskey-blanc.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And more I'd like to tell to you
Of how he did the Devil's will
 In that bewitch'd canoe,
But the tale of it would be too long,
 O much too long, indeed!
Yet in parish-records you may read
How, with a drunken shanty-crew,
They saw him pass in that canoe,
Piercing the clouds with awful speed,—
 Let that be a lesson to you!

8

So thus that August afternoon,
 Among those haunted hills,
I met that young, bedevill'd squaw,
The luring, lissome Lottilà,
 Minding her whiskey-stills.
And truly I was glad I met her,
Yet I am shy, and sometimes nervous,
And I wonder'd what excuse would serve us
 To know each other better;
But lifting my hat to the brown, young maid,
She smiled straight at me, unafraid,
 And presently began
To speak with pretty words that ran
Thro' English, French and Indian,—
 It was a lovely jargon;
But she said no word of Jacques Valbeau,
Who with the Devil, long ago,
 Made such a splendid bargain;
 So how was I to know?
Now it's sometimes sweet to be indiscreet,
As for me I am never wise;
So we sat us down on the warm, dry sod,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

'Mid brown grass and golden rod,
Watching the butterflies.
And she talk'd and talk'd as I held her hand,
And when I could not understand
I look'd down deep into her eyes.
Perhaps the thing sounds silly,
But think of the picture that she made,
Array'd like a tiger-lily:
Her body brown and quivering
In that revealing petticoat,
With catamount-claws at her fine throat
Fixt on a catgut string;
And the copper beads and color'd quills,
Just that and her dainty moccasins,—
O she was the dreamliest thing!
And I met her, for my sins,
Somewhere back of Ottawa,
Among the oldest hills.

9

The sun was slipping down the sky,
Close to the green horizon,
When sudden I saw the fairest sight
That ever I set my eyes on:
A yellow canoe, with three of a crew,
Almost too fast to follow,
Straight out of the sky to the hilltop nigh,
Came skimming along like a swallow;
And then to the cabin, right below,
It slid with a motion easy and slow,
And a man stept out—already you know
'Twas Jacques Valbeau—'twas Jacques Valbeau!
Gaunt he was like an eagle,
With an evil, eagle glance;

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

His black eye look'd me through and through,
And his blue one leer'd askance;
The front of his head had been tomahawk'd,
But part way down his back,
His hair was flowing coarse and black,
Like the tail of a horse that is dockt;
But he had a very engaging smile,
And I liked the way that he talk'd.
He was straight as an arrow when he walk'd,
And, after a little while,
I thought him a handsome man—almost,
And really quite a delightful host.
He introduced the other two
Who rode with him in the big canoe.
One was a fat little country girl,
With carrotty hair in a towsell'd curl,
Her dolly eyes had tears at the rim,
And her face was pale as milk that is skim,
And she was a sad little girl.
The other guest was a shantyman,
Half drunk by the looks of him;
But the shantyman was an Irishman,
And that is enough for him.
Then Lottilà and the country girl
Left us and went to the upper
Cabin above the whiskey-still,
To set the table for supper,
While we sat down in the red sunlight,
And listened to Jacques Valbeau
As he told prodigious stories
Of two hundred years ago,
Of all the old coureurs-de-bois
Dead so long ago,—
We still there in the red sunlight,
And they all underground.

Then I heard a sound, and I look'd around,
 Then up where Lottilà
 Was ringing a queer little oblong bell—
 (Maybe 'twas just a cowbell,
 Tho' I think 'twas silver, so clear and sweet
 The silver tone of it fell)—
 And gladly we follow'd Valbeau to the upper
 Cabin where we were to have our supper.
 For me, I was more than ready to eat,
 And the supper was a dream.
 We'd buttermilk and new potat,
 And a roasted chicken, great and fat,
 With cauliflower in cream,
 And a glass or two of whiskey-blanc,
 Just to help the meal along,
 And another glass, and after that
 Tabac de habitant.

10

Upon my soul, I never knew
 Just when we enter'd the big canoe,
 The same as one can never keep
 The moment clear one falls asleep.
 But so it was until I found
 We were no more upon the ground.
 Now I at times am extremely nervous,
 As I said before, and when I found
 How that bewitch'd canoe did swerve us
 Up and away from the solid ground,
 With the hills a-sinking all around,
 And we once more in the copper glim
 Of the Sun we lost somewhere before,

O then, indeed, I thought small blame
 To the frighten'd girl with the towsell'd curl,
 And dolly eyes with tears at the rim,
 And face all pale as milk that is skim—
 I'll bet that my own was the same!
 But the shantyman was too drunk, I think,
 To know where we were—it's a beastly shame
 The way those Irish drink.

11

Now remember aviation
 Differs quite from navigation,
 For always in the water
 Of the river that you ride in,
 Or be it smooth or ripply,
 A canoe is very tipply,
 And steadily you kneel.
 But through the air you glide in
 A fashion that you feel
 It's a medium to confide in,
 And you needn't keep a keel,—
 That much I saw at a glance.
 And tho' I'm not sufficiently wise
 To make it clear, you can't capsize
 So long as you properly balance,
 Or rise by levitation.
 Now, that's why aviation
 Differs quite from navigation,
 And I had begun to feel easy again,
 And ready to take a chance,
 When all of a sudden it started to rain
 Right over our heads, and there was a growl
 Of thunder far down in the West.
 Then the Sun went out, and the wind 'gan howl,
 And a storm came bounding along on the crest

Of the massy clouds, grown sulphurous,
And there was the blue zig-zag and flash
Of lightning, follow'd by instant crash

Of the thunder nearing us.
With that Valbeau began to sing,
While Lottilà did sway and swing
Her brown arms perilous:

*Gai faluron falurette,
Gai faluron dondé!*

I did the same but tremblingly,
And the Indian girl did grin with glee

To see the white girl, shrunk,
With her face in her hands and her head on my
knee,

But the shantyman still lay drunk,
So how could I put her away?
It was all so characteristic!

*Gai faluron falurette,
Gai faluron dondé!*

Now, it's all very fine to sing that way

When everything else is right,
But we sailed straight into a loaded cloud,
So villainous anarchistic

It bang'd like tons of dynamite:—
For a time I was blind with the awful light,
And deaf with the awful roar;

I felt we were blown clean out of sight,
And then I felt we had sunk

To the bottomless pit for evermore;
But the shantyman still lay drunk.

It makes me shiver to think of it now,
But after a bit I rallied somehow.

Valbeau was laughing at the bow,
And he went far back to speak:
"Holà, monsieur; comment ça va?"

To keep my face with Lottilà,
 I managed just to stammer:
 "Bully, Valbeau—c'est magnifique!
 But go where the clouds are calmer!"

12

We were up in a cool, sweet air,
 Under a wonderful sky,
 Velvety dark and richly sown
 With wonderful stars from zone to zone,
 And all of them seem'd so nigh,
 But a little more, and we would play
 Near the opal arch of the Milky Way,
 With the yellow Moon near by.
 Then over the rim we look'd far down
 Where the World had vanish'd in ire,
 Where fold on fold of the black clouds roll'd,
 Roaring and fearful with fire,
 And we rose from that Devil's crucible,
 Like souls that are rising released from Hell,
 To regions of glory and gold.
 Higher and higher and higher!
 And the air grew thin and cold:
 But higher and higher and higher
 I urged Valbeau to explore
 Nearer and nearer that border of gold
 And limit where mortals expire:
 Higher and higher and higher!
 While a million millions miles to the fore,
 I watch'd the glint of a jewell'd door
 In the Gardens of Desire:
 Higher and higher and higher!
 Till I was dazed and my breath was gone,
 And I could see no more.

When I came to myself we were sailing down,
And circling like a feather
In a slow, descending, spiral flight
Thro' mellow moonlit weather:
And the country girl croon'd with delight,
And claspt her hands together.
But still her head droop'd on my knee
As she claspt her hands together,
And so close were we that none could see
As I fool'd with a carroty curl:
Alas! I admit my conduct was raw,
For my heart was all to Lottilà,
But I kissed the other girl.
Now it's a great mistake, when up in the skies,
To kiss the other girl,
Just for a pair of dolly eyes,
Or a cute little carroty curl:
Yet not the slightest harm was meant,
With me it's a matter of temperament;
But the shantyman woke up!
O, blast that Irish pup!
He woke and caught us in the act,
Just at the moment our lips had smackt,
And he went for me, hell-bent;
Let out from his ugly throat a yell,
Told Lottilà just what he saw,
And—before I had time to explain,
Or argue against the fact—
That fact so apparently plain—
They both made at me so savage I fell
Without a chance to prepare!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And I fell, and I fell, and I fell—my Lord!
It's the awfulest feel to fall overboard
From a canoe away up in the air:
It's really too swift to describe or tell,
But first you feel you're out of it,
And then you feel a thump,
And after that you're generally
A most unlovely lump.
But in my case 'twas different,
My body was caught by a wind-current,
And it drove me sideways on,
With a muffled whack, 'gainst a big haystack,
And I tumbled it over and lay on my back
Unconscious till the dawn,
And so flat, flat, flat,
That when I arose in misery,
A long time after that,
'Twas hard to remember where I was at,
And I sigh'd lugubriously,
With my body so stiff and my head so sore,
It couldn't have hurt me any more
If I'd been out all night on a spree—
Gee!

14

Now let me end, O bulbous friend!
This rhyme ere I begin to
Tell other things irrelevant
Of venturings extravagant
And mystery and sin too:
For I've had my time in every clime
The Lord has led me into:—
But give me August, after all,
If I be free to roam and loll
Among those tiger-lily hills
Back of Ottawa.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

I am ready to risk whatever befall
To meet once more that little squaw,
The luring lissome Lottilà,

Minding her whiskey-stills;
To listen again to her pretty patois,
And hold her hand and hear her sing
Among those tiger-lily hills,

For she was the dreamliest thing!

Gai faluron falurette,

I think I hear her yet,
Out there, in her buckskin petticoat,
With catamount-claws at her fine throat,

Fixt on a catgut string;
And the copper beads and color'd quills,

And dainty moccasins,—
The girl who met me, for my sins,
Somewhere back of Ottawa,
The wanton town of Ottawa,
Among the oldest hills.

Gai faluron falurette,

Gai faluron dondé!

MOTHER

1

THERE'S a voice that I have heard
Along the Way of Life,
A voice that soundeth only
When my soul is worn with strife,
When I fall in utter weakness
On the stony, endless steep,
Someone comes and whispers to me
"Sleep, child, sleep!"

2

'Tis the Mother of us all
That crooneth to me then,
Soothing me with visions
And dreams beyond my ken,
With a song I do not understand,
Whose words I cannot keep,
Only the burden of her song—
“Sleep, child, sleep!”

3

O Mother—holy Mother!
O Mother of my soul!
Should day departing leave me
Afar off from my goal,
Let me fall as a weakling back
To thy bosom, dim and deep!
And o'er my failure whisper only
“Sleep, child—sleep!”

HARD TIMES NO MORE

THE desert trail hath ended in
A garden way at last:
The burden of the iron years
Of wandering is past:
Dear Heart! the very children cry,
Good-bye, Hard Times, good-bye!

Hard Times come again no more!
Hard Times come again no more!
O happy children of the King!
Hear them sing, sing, sing,
Hard Times come again no more!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

How little in the Wilderness
The great relief is guess'd!
Where seek the weary multitude
Continually for rest!
And dream not how it draweth nigh—
Good-bye, Hard Times, good-bye!

Hard Times come again no more!
Hard Times come again no more!
O happy children of the King!
Hear them sing, sing, sing,
Hard Times come again no more!

The things that seem'd as shadows once
Alone are real here:
The glories of the Promised Land
Shine out before us, dear!
And we shall enter, you and I,—
Good-bye, Hard Times, good-bye!

Hard Times come again no more!
Hard Times come again no more!
O happy children of the King!
Hear them sing, sing, sing,
Hard Times come again no more!

THE DREAM OF THE DEEP

"We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight."

—*Emerson.*

1

Lo, the Deep hath dream'd a dream
Eternities between!
An endless flow of endless dust
Wherein unnumber'd gods are thrust,
Who writhe unseen.

2

And blind and dumb they be therein
And find nor rest nor ease;
From stupor rous'd by quenchless lust
For that—they know not what—that dust
Can ne'er appease.

3

And writhing so, they wreak the dust
To shapes of flor and faun,
That rise and fall and rise anew,
Crumbling, aye, as the gods reel through,
Until—anon—

4

A few see thro' the murky reek
What spirall'd pathway looms
In Titan reaches, coil on coil;—
Ah! the wise gods know 'tis bitter with toil
And link'd with tombs!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

5

Yet the air grows clear as they climb, and keen
 With perfume of numberless flowers;
With passion of pleasure and poison of pain,
And tang of things tasted again and again
 Thro' the endless hours.

6

But ever they feel one soundless urge
 Ominous under all,
As wrought from the primal discontent
Of some abysmal banishment
 Beyond recall.

7

Nor purple bowers of idleness,
 Nor all the feasts of Time,
Can free the gods of their grim unrest,
Nor lure them from the awful quest
 Whereon they climb.

8

The ages pass, and they find no end,
 And vain it all doth seem;
Yet still they toil for a topmost stair
Whereon to wake—somehow—somewhere—
 Beyond the dream.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

THE SEER

IF I have seen the Gods—the primal Three
Who play a game that hath no goal in view—
Who make, destroy, and evermore renew
Within the bubble Space all things that be—
Why should I halt and labor soberly,
Or care to have men find my vision true?
Enough, dear Heart, if I impart to you
The vast assurance that it gives to me!

Their muddy brains would make it all a lie,
Tho' with most golden words I told it o'er;
So much I've seen that I must see yet more
While Time still gives occasion. Then to die,
Let loose, and on my single way explore
The unimagin'd orbits of the Sky!

THE BUTTERFLY

1

SUMMERTIME, and a wasted shroud, and the sun-
light glancing through;
And the stir of a creeping thing withal;
Thinking to crawl,—
It flew.

2

As if a yellow pansy from its stem had loos'd and
flown,
Up it flutter'd, scarce aware,
Thro' crystal air
Unknown.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

3

To find the narrow world that was now blossom'd
endless wide:
And sailing on its saffron wings,
 Soon wondrous things,
 It spied.

4

Around were honied feasts all set in the hearts of a
 thousand flowers;
And merry mates to while away
 In wanton play
 The hours.

5

With them it drifted, wing aslant, on veering winds
 at ease,
Or ventur'd cool luxurious flights
 To the curving heights
 Of trees.

6

Or lone amid the pink, delicious petals of a rose
Anon 'twould linger somnolent
 In the rapt content
 Which knows

7

No end to leaves, no end to flowers, and the sweet
 grass under all:
Then revel again with its airy clan
 Till night began
 To fall.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

8

'Twould cling in careless slumber then to the near-
est scented brake,
Or as the dusky hours wore on
Perchance anon
'Twould wake

9

With star-enamor'd kinsmen to explore a mystic
noon,
Winging a far, entranced flight
In the lost light
Of the Moon.

10

To settle at length awearied in some lily-chalice
pale;
Nor waken till full-breasted Morn
Rose breathing warm
And hale.

11

So passed for it the easy hours; but Summer waned
at last,
And its flower-body fell away
As a husk one day
Offcast.

12

Yet surely as before it knew a joyous wakening,
So on some new and far-away
Exultant day
In Spring

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

13

Another form shall build itself from out the form-
less Deep;
For outer life befitting well
The thing that fell
Asleep.

14

For in the loom of things to be the meanest life
hath place
To mark the way that it shall go,—
By patterns slow
To trace

15

Its long ascent thro' Dust and Death to God's in-
finity;
And evermore the seed unseen
Of what hath been
Shall be.

GOD'S KALEIDOSCOPE

MUCH too much of this I have heard:
The World is growing forever old,
Its flowers perish in the mould,
And all things pass as a tale that is told:
Life is a glimmer, fading fast
Into the charnel of the Past,
And Death is ever the final word.
O much too much of this I have heard!
Of course we know that all things flow,
But yet, as some other Greek explains,
The all is fasten'd with great chains,

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And neither you nor I can dream
How this or that can slip from the Scheme:
Why ask of the dusk what it does with the dawn,
Or ask where the end of the circle has gone,
Or where into what the wind blows?
Yet this one questions of last year's snows,
This other, because of a wither'd rose,
Argues for me a blank to-morrow,
And, in the very light of dawn,
He bids me of his wine-cup borrow
What he resents—oblivion!
O great Omar! I bow to you,
And nod familiar to Villon,
But I have neither hope nor fear
O' being disperst in the atmosphere:
Oblivion—I wish there were
Such easy exit on the air,
Beyond desire, beyond regret,
And clearly out of anywhere:
To be, so far as we're concern'd,
An issue without sequence—nay
Too much of Nature's game we've learn'd
To credit that, I think, Omar!
Your rose has wither'd—well, that's clear;
But of itself 'twas a passing phase,
And may again on a day of the days
From the undistinguish'd mass appear,
As much itself as is itself
Now in the light of your partial eye:
And as for the snows of yester-year,
Why, every flake of them still is here:
No one of all has 'scaped from charge
In sea or sky or whirling storm:
So looking at it by and large
It seems entirely a matter of form:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

There is no pit of nothingness
Wherein what is can e'er be less,
And we may say of everything
It is itself continuing:
The very shadows that we see
Are fast involved; 'tis a safe guess
No thing has been, no thing can be,
That is not now essentially;
And evermore we yet may hope
Within our little nets to rope
Some of that endless element
Of mystery and beauty blent
With the turning of God's kaleidoscope.

NIRVANA

Down the ages comes a sound grown dark
With unremember'd meaning. Many heard
Fall from the lips of One illum'd a word
Whose doubtful gospel seem'd to quench all spark
Of separate love and joy, with promise stark,
If from their patient hearts still undeterr'd
They rooted all desire—the boon conferr'd
Should be to pass from Life without a mark.

Old devotees, dream on! Old scholars nod
Over the meaning of the Indian sage!
But I, awakening in a later age,
Choose not the deserts where His saints have trod,
Nor cleave to ancient rites or holy page;
Singing on my careless way to God.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

CONTENT

BUT God stays—tho' all else fail and fall!

He seems sometimes a Playfellow of mine

Who winks at me and laughs—sometimes a fine,

Red Flame to gloriously destroy: a Call

To bring green Worlds again: immemoral

A Mood that wakes in me: an Anodyne

To soothe me unto Death: a Sound divine:

A dim enamour'd Silence under all.

Amid the jar of things, and in wrong ways,

I hurt myself continually, and yet

Withal I stand, and with fix'd eyes forget

The bitter unfulfilment of my days,

And feel my way to Him, content to let

All else between my fingers slip—God stays!

THE CLUE

To make the great escape—to issue hence—

To live no more, nor dream among the Dead,

Nor be with endless change discomforted—

Think not you need all Time's experience

To ponder on some granite eminence.

Enough in any life to find this thread,

And loosely by its blended strands be led:

Unmeasur'd Love and sheer Indifference.

Beloved! would you have me wait for you—

Your fellow-pilgrim on the formless Way—

And waiting seek some form of words to say—

Some novel phrase to make old precepts new

And draw you swiftly nearer to me? Nay,

Mere words have worth no more—you have the

Clue!

ILLUMINED

1

I WOKE in the Land of Night,
With a dream of Day at my heart;
Its golden outlines vanish'd,
But its charm would not depart;
Like music still remaining,
But its meaning—no man can say
In the Land of Night where they know not
Of Day, nor the things of Day.

2

I dwelt in the chiefest city
Of all the Land of Night;
Where the fires burn ever brighter
That give the people light;
Where the sky above is darken'd,
And never a Star is seen,
And they think it but children's fancy
That ever a Star hath been.

3

But out from that city early
I fled by a doubtful way;
And faltering oft and lonely
I sought my dream of Day;
Till I came at last to a Mountain
That rose exceeding high,
And I thought I saw on its summit
A glint as of dawn from the sky.

4

'Twas midway on that Mountain
 That I found an altar-stone,
 Deep-cut with runes forgotten,
 And symbols little known;
 And scarce could I read the meaning
 Of the legends carven there,
 But I lay me out on that altar,
 Breathing an ancient prayer:

5

"By the God of the timeless Sky,
 O Saint of the Altar, say
 What gift hast thou for me?
 For I have dream'd of Day:
 But I seek nor gift nor power,
 I pray for naught but light;
 And only for light to lead me
 Out of the Land of Night!"

6

Long I lay on that altar,
 Up-gazing fearfully
 Thro' the awful cold and darkness
 That now encompass'd me;
 Till it seem'd as I were lying drown'd
 Under a lifeless sea.

7

There shone as a pale blue Star,
 Intangible—serene—
 And I saw a spark from it fall
 As it were a crystal keen;

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And it flash'd as it fell and pierc'd
My temples white and cold;
Then round that altar-stone once more
The awful darkness roll'd.

8

But there was a light on my brow,
And a calm that steel'd me through,
And I was strong with a strength
That never before I knew;
With a strength for the trackless heights,
And scorn of the World below—
But I rose not up from that altar-stone,
I would not leave it so.

9

“O Saint of the Altar, say
How may this light redeem?
For tho' on my brow like a jewel
Its Star hath left a gleam,
O Saint, 'tis a light too cold and cruel
To be the light of my dream!”

10

Anon 'twas a crimson Star
That over the Altar shone,
And there sank as a rose of flame
To my heart ere the Star was gone;
And out from the flames thereof
A subtle fragrance then
Went stealing down the mountain-side
O'er the lowly ways of men.

11

The Star was gone, but it brought
 To light in its crimson glow
 The lovely things forgotten
 I dream'd of long ago;
 And gladly then I had given
 My life to all below;
 Yet I rose not up from that altar-stone,
 I would not leave it so.

12

And at last was a golden Star;
 But I scarce know how nor where;
 For it melted all around me,
 And the other Stars were there;
 And all in one blissful moment
 The light of Day had come;—
 Then I reel'd away from that altar-stone,
 Old, and blind, and dumb.

13

I dwell again in the city,
 I seek no more for light;
 But I go on a mission of silence
 To those who would leave the Night;
 And for this—and this thing only,
 Thro' the evil streets I stray;
 I who am free to the timeless Sky
 Illumin'd for ever with Day.

THE TOMB

AND he is dead at last! O long ago—
So long ago it is since yesterday!
The World hath sunken round me, old and grey,
To sound of endless litanies of woe:—
Dear God, if I could know—could only know
Beyond the creeds and feeble prayers they say
That I might find him yet in some sure way—
How I would laugh against this Tomb below!
I've lost the meaning of the words he said
To ease my heart before he pass'd from me:
I walk the ruin'd Earth in agony,
And cry unto the Waste uncomforted:
Across the blacken'd Skies I start to see
His name writ flamingly—but he is dead!

THE LAST SONG

1

LONE, Heart, lone!
And the Gates are barr'd above!
O Heart with my Heart alone!
Love!

2

Cease, Heart, cease!
For the last red embers gleam!
O Heart from thy sorrow cease!
Dream!

3

Still, Heart, still!
God's night is round us deep!
O Heart to my Heart lie still!
Sleep!

ROUNDAABOUT RHYMES

ROUNDAABOUT RHYMES

1918

*What place can there be for a minstrel now
Against these ghastly times?
For one who would sing to a light guitar
His picaroonish rhymes?
While the pain and filth of war, and the waste
Go on, and we lack for bread?
O the Dark Fool is loose in the world—
And the Fool of Joy is dead!*

SOMEWHAT CONCERNING BALLADES

ONE morning in September I was strolling downhill toward the grey waterfront of Montreal. It was a morning to make one polite, and I was on business of no particular importance. Passing a fruit-stall, I saw a little boy looking wistfully at a heap of August apples. They were streaked with red and pale green, and to a knowing eye well advertised the delicious, tart juiciness between the core and the peel. In my mood I asked the boy to have some. He filled his pockets, and I took a couple for myself. They smelt good, and we ate them as two comrades, and with much smacking of our lips, on our way down a quiet side street.

Already the remote air of autumn was over the city. Domes and steeples, churches, hotels, tenements, gaunt factories and commercial palaces, all alike were steeped in a fine golden haze. The trees were coloring red and yellow in the surpassing way of Eastern Canada. About our autumn there is a glamor of the ongoing; it is forever hinting at perennial loveliness beyond the mould and compass of this world; in high faith declaring it, even while sinking before the desolate, desperate, white face of winter. And in the fey light of that morning, and the apparent passing of things, I went figuring another mode of time, wherein the world and all is more happily perceived. To my immediate environment, however, I was recalled by a delighted exclamation from the boy. He had his eye on a gory picture, displayed in a shop window, by which he halted. There was a battle scene from

some belated Christmas annual; furious masses of men; trampling horses; the glint of sword and bayonet; the reek of cannon; uproar, blood, and fire. He wanted the picture very much, and that morning found that so far as I was concerned to ask was to receive.

The shop from the outside was dingy and altogether unpromising. But within there seemed to me a perfect treasure-trove of books. They were stacked in rather disorderly fashion on counter and shelves; many books greatly valued by a few, others to meet a more general taste, but little of the whole store really popular except the magazines. Because of dusty panes, and patches of brown and yellow paper pasted on them where the sun shone through, there was an atmosphere in the shop that made me think of amber and meerschaum. There were bluish rays through it from two small windows at the rear. The shopkeeper looked like a wood-cut from an early edition of Dickens or Balzac. He was rather tall and spare of frame, with a thin, grey whisker, and he peered at me with eyes guileless as those of a baby or an old sea captain. His manner was courteous, but all the while he seemed intent on something quite apart from his shop and his customer, I felt that he was more or less indifferent about the sale of books, and that he would much rather talk of them to any one who displayed an intelligent acquaintance with their subject-matter; even, it seemed to me, with their imprint and binding. My esteem for him was deepened by repeated visits, and I found that he had a class of patrons as cultured, cosmopolitan, and bibliopolitan as himself. Eventually he got the notion that I had a taste for

verse of the exotic or decadent order. This I might have denied, but on my second visit to his shop I happened to ask if he knew of any good metrical translation of Baudelaire, and from that question I suppose he came to a conclusion. It served to give me a somewhat hazy interest in his eyes, so I played up to the role assigned me, and as a result he brought various books to my attention which had been before that unknown to me. Among other things needed for my education, he suggested an anthology of English verse done in antique Romanesque and Gallic forms.

I always approach an anthology in the same dull, half-hearted way that I do a picture gallery or a table-d'hôte dinner. The things presented mix in spite of me; they acquire a composite, inferior flavor from each other; I get stuffed without any distinct satisfaction. In an anthology there is nothing to match; one poem jars with another; there is not that harmonizing undertone imparted to a volume by a single author, whose manner and personality prevails through every line from the first to the last page. So I was not at first rightly made acquainted with these intricate mediæval forms. For all practical purposes I had been ignorant of them until I bought the anthology. Of their value in old French, or as to how well they satisfied an ancient demand, I cannot judge, for I am not learned in these matters. But from what I read of them they seemed for the most part parlor trifles, curios in rhyme, verbal bric-a-brac to the vigor of English unsuited. Later I found a few turned out in slang by Halverson, of Toronto—ballade, villanelle, triolet, rondeau and roundel—more to my liking than the labored conceits of the

anthology. Perhaps, in Old Provence, when some minstrel-knight would set forth in springtime, with merry jongleurs by his side, to visit a neighboring castle, his plaints and love-songs uttered in these involved forms made good listening for all his audience. But in first attempting them I felt as if I were fingering obsolete instruments in the dead atmosphere of a museum; rotes, rebecks, ghitterns, theorbos, gignes, cloncordes, galoots, and what not troubadourish fiddles; goblin-bellied things fantastically stringed; well enough one time maybe for a low serenade to some lady barely out of reach, but now fit for little more than a toy symphony. However, I was quite ready to admit that such forms might have merit beyond my appreciation. I have never been so crass as to undervalue precise form in verse. Quite the contrary. To me some verse-forms are destinate vehicles of poetic emotion; so much so as to appear in the order of nature. For just as various minerals strive to crystal according to the pattern chosen by their informing spirit, so certain moods will seek formal verbal expression, will seek to crystallize, and in so doing achieve an effort beyond the mere meaning of the words. Some of these forms will appear and persist through many languages. These are essential forms, determined not so much by syllabic content as by undulation in the lines, and by the combination of lines in a stanza, and the sequence of rhymes where rhymes are used. They have a quality akin to polarity. Consider, for instance, the Italian sonnet; its octave and sestet, its measures and rhyme-sequence, are no more arbitrary or artificial than the cube or hexagon or octagon in which some minerals express their

highest vital activity. The English sonnet, used by Shakespeare, although inferior in form-value to the Italian, is nevertheless an essential form if written as four alternately-rhyming quatrains clinched by a couplet. When it does not show these lines of cleavage it is merely a fourteen-line poem, which can be as well done with twelve or sixteen lines so far as nicety of form goes. I had knowledge of most verse forms made native to English in the past, and after some examination of the Romanesque forms in the aforesaid anthology I felt entitled to express an opinion concerning them. Of these restricted forms it seemed to me that, with the exception of the Italian sonnet, there was nothing to equal in form-value the French ballade. Yet in English we find a hundred good sonnets for one good ballade. And some writers ask why, for the forms are almost equally ancient, and the one is no more difficult of achievement than the other. Yet the true reason should be apparent at a glance. Think what would have been the fate of the Italian sonnet in English if Petrarch, Tasso, Michael Angelo and other Italians who confirmed its shape had been misled into making the rhymes of its sestet answer to the rhymes of its octave. If they had we may be sure that Mister Schoolmaster would have insisted upon keeping such a big-drum blunder unaltered, and would have been supercilious toward any other form and called it illegitimate, a term which he applies sometimes to the Shakespearian sonnet. The Italian sonnet in English would then have been as blighted with monotony as is now, for the most part, the French ballade. To this point I will return later when dealing with ballade structure.

Of poetic forms in general it is to be noted that while literature sticks to its own language the forms pass on. To lift a masterpiece from one language to another is a bit of magic seldom accomplished. But it is done at times without loss; it may be even with some gain. The fine English of Cranmer and other Elizabethan scholars probably improved what there is of literature in the Bible. No doubt Keats saw the glory of Homer through Chapman. Baudelaire gave Poe to France, as Fitzgerald gave Omar to us; Schlegel, they say, has given Shakespeare to the Germans. But such translations are indeed rare. Poetic forms, however, are easily adapted from one language to another; in fact, the forms will outlast the language in which they first appear. In some languages we find an excess of rhyme, rich or insipid, according to the twist of our ear. This seems to have been especially true of the *Langue d'Oc*. About the cord of that language the poets of Provence gave first shape to the alba, serena, sirvente, canza, rondel, triolet, virelai, villanelle, and other verse-forms. Truly crystalline they appear, but blurred with unvaried rhyme. For excuse it may be said that in the *Lang d'Oc* it was probably more difficult to keep the rhymes out of a stanza than put them in, and so, in order to maintain the metrical restrictions and exclusiveness which some poets think a necessary part of their art, most of these poems were made to keep to one set of rhymes, those associated in the first stanza. This custom added to the difficulties of achievement, but largely at the expense of virility, color and euphony, the qualities most worth while in any poem. These troubadours of Provence trained themselves to many vaudeville

tricks as a part of their calling, such as catching apples on the point of a dagger, leaping through rings, playing a great variety of instruments in difficult positions. It was all taken as part of their profession. And so quite naturally the spirit of vaudeville, the love of aptly doing difficult things in the most difficult way, made its influence felt in their verse-making. The poets of Northern France, whose tongue was destined to survive the *Lang d'Oc*, took over these Provence forms, clung to their monotone rhyme system, and still further elaborated them. Then appeared the French ballade and the chant royal, the latter a monster of intricate monotony which, in English, is fairly humpbacked with the rhyme it carries. It staggers to a weary close after supporting sixty-one lines on a shift of only five rhyme-tones. Those who achieve these things may be word jugglers; those who get delight of them may be persons of precise culture; but musicians they are not. The chant royal is a trick for the sake of a trick; vaudeville triumphant in verse. And so with some other of these forms, such as the sestina. They all, however, have been seriously and exhaustively discoursed upon by old writers. If one chooses to study them, he may begin so far back as the year 1390, when appeared "The Art of Making Chansons, Ballades, Virelais and Rondels," by Eustache Deschamps; about a century later Henry de Croi published "The Art and Science of Rhetoric in the Making of Rhymes and Ballades;" then followed a treatise by one Antonio Tempo on the forms collected in "The Spanish and Italian Apollo" of Rabanus Maurus; and so on down the centuries, until in English one comes to Austin

Dobson. In the Library of Parliament are several such books. But there is some danger in the study of them; you will risk the obsession of rules; you may become a mere metrical virtuoso, and lose what poetic vision you have; either that, or you will begin to scunner at all verse. The fine points of poetic form should be apparent at sight; should be appreciated without study; should, above all, not be rendered distasteful by pedantic anatomy. One admires a beautiful body, but the sense of beauty vanishes with dissection. Beauty can never be the subject of precise analysis; it can never be evoked by formulas. Beauty is a spirit of which we are for a moment aware through some inexact synthesis of odor, color, sound, shape, motion, or verbal allusion. It arouses in varying degree a characteristic emotion, somehow reminiscent, somehow premonitory, under stress of which we vaguely feel the need of other senses with which to embrace something supremely desirable and presently unattainable. Beauty, for our perception, must have a body of some kind, but being too finical as to its body is the surest way to lose it. And so while poetic technique is well enough in its way, yet verse, whose excellence is estimated by good conduct marks for obedience to rules and established usage, has but the lowest form of beauty; it sinks to the level of being merely skilful, mathematic, or true to type. And this is well shown of ballads and ballades, concerning which I have learned a little for those who may be willing to take my say-so without troubling further.

There is a Latin verb, "ballare," to dance. Ball, ballet, billiards, ballad and ballade all come out of this verb. But now a ballad has little to do

with dancing, and a ballade nothing. Yet always a thing is older than its name, and like enough the ballad as a combination of song and dance, was universal long before Latin was contrived; probably it was familiar to folk of the Stone Age. Touching on this point, Puttenham said some time ago:

“Poesie is more ancient than the artificiall of the Greeks and Latines, and used of the savage and uncivill, who were before all science and civilitie. This is proved by certificate of merchants and travellers who by late navigations have surveyed the whole world, and discovered wild people, strange and savage, affirming that the American, the Perusine, and the very Caniball do sing and also say their highest and holiest matters in certain riming versicles.”—*Art of English Poesie*, 1589.

The ballad as a popular song, the ballad as a popular epic, and the ballade as a highly evolved poetic form beyond popular appreciation have this one feature in common—the repetition of idea and phrase. This repetition is irregular in most songs and epics, regulated in such forms as the English roundelay and the Scotch ring-sang, and precise in the ballade, as hereafter shown. It is worth noting that the English term “roundelay” is applied equally to songs and dances in which certain parts are repeated at set intervals. This tendency to rhythmic repetition continues through all songs sung by men in the open, and generally appears in the song and dance ballads rendered by the cantabanks of modern vaudeville. Here is a specimen stanza, picked up at random on the wharves of Montreal:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

As I went strolling down the street,
All in the town of Rio,
A damsel neat I chanc'd to meet
Who closed at me one eye-o,
Who winkt at me with her eye-o! (jig ad lib.)

Note, please, the last two lines. They exemplify a certain poetic device used as naturally and instinctively now by common song-smiths as it was used ages ago in primitive Hebrew prosody. I mean the repetition of the same idea with some variation of words. Why this trick should be pleasing or effective I do not know; but at times it is so very much. Perhaps it has some hypnotic influence. David continually resorted to it in his psalms; and it has been used by many writers of English verse. I quote the following examples as I find them ready to hand; there may be others better:

Praise him upon the loud cymbals:
Praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals.
—David.

Our soul is bowed down to the dust:
Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
—David.

He raiseth the poor out of the dust:
He lifteth the needy out of the dunghill.
—David.

As the scoriac rivers that roll,
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous torrents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole:
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.
—Edgar Allan Poe.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty withered years—
No flower, but twenty shrivelled years.

—Francis Thompson.

My theory is that certain emotions, ranging from ribald to sacred, if awakened in men of certain brain and temperament, will manifest fixt verbal forms, irrespective of age or language, as fitly and inevitably as crystals about a cord, or frost-flowers upon a window-pane.

These forms vary greatly in construction and intricacy. Among the Hebrews they appear rudimentary; among the Persians they appear almost as complex, I am told, as those used by the most extravagant rhymers of old France.

The ballad in vogue in England and Scotland during the Middle Ages was a lay, or narrative poem, of simple and loose construction, and was concerned mainly with chivalric combat, beleaguered love, or some adventure in bright or dark faery. It was chanted at will to the vamping of a harp; contained an indefinite number of stanzas of four, six or eight lines, alternating usually on four and three accents, the lines of three accents rhyming, the others unrhymed, or rhyming on themselves. Free use was made of assonance and alliteration. The following stanzas are quoted to show the average form and structure of these old ballads:

Hearken to me, gentlemen;
Come and you shall hear,
I'll tell of two of the boldest brethren
That ever born y-were.
(Ballad of King Estmere, 15th Century.)

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And I would never tire Janet
In fairyland to dwell,
But aye at ilka seven years
They pay the teind to hell:
And I'm so fair and fat o' flesh
I fear 'twill be mysel.

(Ballad of Tamlane, 16th Century.)

Gowden glist the yellow links
That round her neck she'd twine;
Her eyen were o' the skyie blue,
Her lips did mock the wine;
The smile upon her bonny cheek
Was sweeter than the bee;
Her voice excellt the birdie's song
Upon the birchen-tree.

(Ballad of the Mermaid, 16th Century.)

Sometimes these ballads had a refrain or chorus at the end of each stanza; sometimes a *hey-derry-down* between the lines, like the *gai-faluron-falurette* of the ancient French songs which one may hear in Quebec. Here is a refrain intended to be imitative:

As I cam in by Garioch land
And doun by Netherha',
There were fifty thousand Hielandmen
A' marching to Harlaw,
Wi' a drie drie drie didronilie drie.

(The Raid of Redswire, 16th Century.)

A typical instance of a form passing to another language is found in one of the old ballads, the "Battle of Harlaw." In that ballad is used the exact stanza of the French ballade; the stanza used by Villon in carrying on the tale of his Testaments. I quote two stanzas:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

The armies met, the trumpet sounds,
The dandring drums aloud did tuck:
Baith armies biding on the bounds
Till ane o' them the field should brook:
Nae help was there, for nane would douk,
Fierce was the fight on ilka side,
And on the ground lay many a buck
Of them that there did battle bide.

Sir James Scrimgeor of Duddop, knight,
Great Constable of fair Dundee,
Unto the duleful death was dicht,—
The King's chief bannerman was he:
A valiant man of chevalrie,
Whose predecessors won that place
At Spey, with gude King William frie,
'Gainst Murray and Macduncan's race.
(Battle of Harlaw, 16th Century.)

Such a form, however, is too involved for a straight-and-away story such as the old minstrels wished to tell. For what they wanted was a form to carry or make memorable a story, not a form to dominate a sentiment or scrap of philosophy as supplied by the French ballade. The English ballad was brought to perfection by the Scotch. It was in that lost time when the Lowlanders of the Border were the knightliest people of Europe. And that was before the time of Burns; before the sway of the Shorter Catechism and the smut of its reaction; a time when the true religion of the Border was high in the afterglow of legendary days—Gothic, Celtic, Arthurian, if you please—but far above Geneva and unafraid of Rome. As a last echo of that time will you find in any other literature lines so simply loyal and lorn as these:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

When day is gone, and night is come,
And a' are boun to sleep,
I think on them that's far awa'
The lee lang night and weep, my dear—
The lee lang night, and weep!
(Early Jacobite.)

or of quainter omen than these:

Yestreen I saw the new Moon
Wi' the auld Moon in her arms,
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear,
We shall have a dreadful storm!
(Sir Patric Spens, 16th Century.)

The French ballade is in nearly all respects distinct from the ordinary ballad. Its form is precise; it has no story to tell; its manner is lyric; its motive didactic. It is a vehicle for the reiteration of some sentiment or aphorism. Those who essay it in English have been content with the final "e" of French spelling, and consequent accentuation of the second syllable, to distinguish it in name from the English ballad. Some other name might better have been chosen for sake of distinction. But, however it be called, a French ballade may be made in English in this manner: Take a single sentiment; beat up a tune answering to a line of three, four or five accents, but preferably four; strain the sentiment over eight such lines with a rhyme-sequence of a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c; put the kernel of your idea, or the emphatic color of your sentiment, into the last line as the burden or refrain of the poem. Then make two more such stanzas, using the same rhyme-tones in the same order, and keeping the last line in each stanza the same as the last line of the first stanza. Having

done this, smoothly finish the thing off with a quatrain, call it the envoy, address it by way of compliment to your prince, mistress, creditor, or other person in authority; keep the same rhyme-tones for this quatrain with the sequence b, c, b, c, and the refrain unaltered as in the preceding stanzas. This will be a ballade of the first form.

The second form has three stanzas of ten lines with a rhyme sequence of a, b, a, b, b, c, c, d, c, d, and an envoy of five lines, rhyming c, c, d, c, d. Ballades of the first form are allowed three rhymes; those of the second form, four rhymes. And if your pedantry exceeds your esthetic sense, and you would show your skill, then you will permit the length of your refrain to not only dominate the length of each line, but if your refrain contains eight syllables you will adopt the eight-line stanza, and in ten syllables, then the ten-line stanza; and if neither eight nor ten syllables, then you will throw it aside and try another. The double ballade, the ballade of double refrain, and the chant royal are ballades built rococo. The double ballade has six stanzas of eight or ten lines, with or without an envoy. The ballade of double refrain has a subordinate refrain which occurs in the fourth line of each of the first three stanzas, and the second of the envoy, with a rhyme sequence of a, b, a, b, b, c, b, c, and the envoy rhyming b, b, c, c. To the chant royal I have already referred in a cursory way. The baroque ballade discards the refrain and envoy altogether, and is of indefinite length. It is the eight-line stanza of the first form continued till the theme is exhausted; each stanza independent as to its own rhymes, but keeping to the order of the first form; that is, a, b, a, b, b, c,

b, c. This is a good form, suited for descriptive, reflective, or even narrative verse, as shown by the Scotch ballad above quoted, "The Battle of Harlaw." No doubt the finest baroque in English is Swinburne's translation of Villon's "Complaint of the Fair Armouress." Unfortunately, Swinburne for once grew prudish, and gave us Villon's greatest poem disfigured with printer's fig leaves. This was a shameful thing to do. In the most offensive way possible it tells the reader that Villon has written verse unfit to print. Even if true, it is not necessary to blurt it out in this fashion; and for so doing Swinburne's pattering ragtime line in praise of his "sad, bad, glad, mad brother's name" will not atone. Some pleasant paraphrase might easily have been used to save the face of the bashful English reader. A hand so deft as that of Swinburne could surely have touched discreetly on all the dainty beauties of that young body of seduction so vividly recalled by the ancient Armouress when she "made moan for the old sweet days:"

"Squatting above the straw-fire's blaze,
The bosom crush'd against the knee,—"

But, despite the ugly asterisks which Swinburne left like pimples on the face of the poem, its authentic picture of the tragedy of all time—beauty in decay—cannot be surpassed.

Last winter in the midst of affairs I made some ballades. Some time in spring I broke them up and began to remodel. The way of it was this: I had followed the form accurately enough, and found it no very difficult thing to do after a few trials. But I rebelled against the inadequate gamut of

rhyme; the rectangular effect; the absolute lack of curve. I had read John Payne's translations of Villon, noting the "Ballad of Old Time Ladies," before I had come across the exquisite rendering of that ballade by Rossetti. And studying Payne's translations, and also the ballades and other forms in the aforementioned anthology, I dissented from their mode of construction to the extent of thinking that in English linked stanzas of the Romanesque order should not be made entirely dependent upon preceding stanzas for rhyme-tones. The rule is irrational; the result satiety. The first stanza of a ballade in English will appear shapely and sound well if at all well done. But continuance of the same rhyme-tones through the second stanza will induce a faded effect, and the ideas, if any there happen to be, are apt to seem trite. As we enter the third stanza, we feel a sense of stuffiness from the same rhyme breathed too often; and generally by the time we find ourselves in the envoy we are longing to open a window in the thing and let in some fresh air. In prosody it is, of course, well to insist upon rules, if they be good rules. But one must not be over-mastered by rules: above all if they sin against euphony. This is true for all matters of language, and need hardly be argued; none but a grammarian would hold otherwise. Touching on grammar, by the way, brings to mind that rule concerning the verb *to be*. Suppose the French, in forming their language, had been dominated by schoolmen with abnormal respect for what they would call logic, but with ears dull to the cadence of vowels. Then the French of to-day, instead of rising above the rule of the verb *to be* when euphony requires, as, vastly to their credit,

they do, would now be trying to say "c'est je" instead of "c'est moi." The French, civilized beyond other races, recognize that clarity and euphony must be maintained as principles above all rules in language. For myself, when I am called upon to choose between a rule of grammar and my ear, always I bow to my ear. Thus I answer "me" to the query "who's there;" and I prefer to say "that's her" instead of "that's she."

Accepting euphony, then, as a principle above all rules in prosody, I submit that in English the strict French form of ballade has too much drone about it to be desirable. It may sound otherwise, of course, in another language. With the French a "rime riche" goes well; with us it is an insipid pun, unendurable in serious or even comic verse. So to the French the tone-value of their ballade may be great. That is an affair of the French. But it does not follow that we must either take it or leave it unchanged; it does not follow that writers of English may not modify the tone and at the same time retain the finest effect of the form. This has been done. I have already referred to a rendering by Dante Gabriel Rossetti of Villon's best-known ballade. Here it is:

Tell me now in what hidden way is
 Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
 Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
 Neither of them the fairer woman?
 Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
 Only heard on river and mere,—
 She whose beauty was more than human?
 But where are the snows of yester-year?

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Where's Heloise, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
From love he won such dule and teen!
And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine?
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
With a voice like any mermaiden,—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice
And Ermengarde, the lady of Maine,—
And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doom'd and burn'd her there,—
Mother of God, where are they then?—
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword,—
But where are the snows of yester-year?
(The Ballad of Dead Ladies.)

Now compare the above Rossetti form with two other versions of this ballade in the strict French form, the first by John Payne, the second by Andrew Lang.

I.

Tell me where, in what land of shade,
Bides fair Flora of Rome, and where
Are Thais and Archipiade,
Cousins-german of beauty rare,
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
That, when one calls by river flow
Or marish, answers out of the air?
But what has become of last year's snow?

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

II.

Where did the learned Heloisa vade,
For whose sake Abelard might not spare
Such dole for love on him was laid
Manhood to lose and a cowl to wear?
And where is the queen who willed whilere
That Burridan, tied in a sack, should go
Floating down Seine from the turret-stair?
But what has become of last year's snow?

III.

Blanche, too, the lily-white queen that made
Sweet music as she a siren were;
Broad-foot Bertha; and Joan the maid,
The good Lorrainer the English bare
Captive to Rouen and burned her there;
Beatrix, Eremburge, Alys,—lo!
Where are they, Virgin debonair?
But what has become of last year's snow?

Envoi.

Prince, you may question how they fare
This week, or liefer this year, I trow:
Still shall the answer this burden bear:
But what is become of last year's snow?
(Ballade of Old Time Ladies.)

Nay, tell me now in what strange air
The Roman Flora dwells to-day:
Where Archippiada hides, and where
Beautiful Thais has passed away?
Whence answers Echo, afield, astray,
By mere or stream—around, below?
Lovelier she than a woman of clay;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Where is wise Heloise, that care
Brought on Abeilard, and dismay?
All for her love he found a snare,
A maimed poor monk in orders grey;
And where's the queen who willed to slay
Buridan, that in sack must go
Afloat down Seine—a perilous way—
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Where's that White Queen, a lily rare,
With her sweet song, the Siren's lay?
Where's Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice fair?
Alys and Ermengarde, where are they?
Good Joan, whom English did betray
In Rouen town and burned her? No,
Maiden and Queen, no man may say;
Nay, but where is the last year's snow?

Envoi.

Prince, all this week thou need'st not pray,
Nor yet this year the thing to know:
One burden answers, ever and aye,
"Nay, but where is the last year's snow?"

(Ballade of Dead Ladies.)

These three translations preserve the same form, the same ideas, the same names, the same refrain. Rossetti, however, varies the rhyme-tones with each stanza, while Payne and Lang keep strictly to the French mode of three rhyme-tones for the entire poem. Rossetti's version from first to last is echoing a plaintive, antique melody in keeping with the burden of the poem; the withered whisper of sedge-grass by some clear pool in a barren land; and in the distance the lute of a troubadour. The tone value of the other two versions in comparison is—well, some people like the not unmusical buzz of a

blue-bottle fly against a window. In a wide world let each one have his choice. But to be quite fair to Payne, who, according to those who should know, was a most exact and scholarly translator, it must be admitted that his rendering of Villon's "Second Ballade of Lords of Old Time" in the strict French manner is a true poem from every standpoint, and surpassed in its way only by Rossetti's "Ballad of Dead Ladies," above quoted. Those who may care to follow this phase of ballade structure further should compare Swinburne's translation of Villon's "Women of Paris" on the Rossetti model with the translation of the same ballade by Payne. This ballade is so poor a thing in itself that neither Swinburne nor Payne could make much of a poem out of it, but the comparison will be useful for showing that it is easy enough to contrive in English the strict French model rather than that of Rossetti, if any should consider it preferable; to do it either way without loss of idea, figure or sentiment, but not without loss of tone and effective utterance; that will almost always be sacrificed if the strict French model be followed instead of the tone variation of Rossetti.

To one who has the knack of rhyme conjoined with the faculty which builds or solves verbal puzzles, these linked stanzas are not very difficult. But the selection and control of them is a nice affair. I would stop at no difficulty of construction which would be justified by results; but merely to retain or add metrical restrictions for the sake of surmounting them, or of actually receiving suggestions therefrom, as recommended by one writer, is to debase one's art. Any restriction which is not essential to form or harmony is vicious. Neither

complexity, nor rare or difficult modes of writing, have any intrinsic poetic value. No true artist ever thinks an object or utterance more or less beautiful because of its rarity or intricacy. Such a notion is excusable only in collectors of stamps or insects or blue china. A ruby now is as beautiful as in the days of Solomon, notwithstanding that science has now made it far more common. Gold will always be beautiful and platinum ugly in spite of the false taste which would countenance the use of platinum for jewelry instead of gold on account of its rarity. The Sun would gain nothing in beauty by appearing but once a year. And I assert that although I have heard a man play tunes very acceptably on a fiddle, balancing himself the while on a slack wire, yet his music had no added value by reason of the difficult position maintained. Rather I appreciated the music the more when I closed my eyes to the acrobat. Yet Gleeson White, an accepted authority in these matters, actually speaks of restrictions as if they had value in themselves, and, referring to French ballades in English, he says: "They must exhibit the art which conceals art, whether by intense care in every minute detail, or a happy faculty for naturally wearing these fetters. The dance in chains must be skilful, the chains worn as decorative adjuncts, and the whole with as much apparent ease as the unfettered dancer could produce."

I am impatient of any such conception of things poetic. A girl's foot compressed to an ugly knob was once a conventional Chinese notion of beauty in the extreme; the so-called "golden lily foot," an unsightly bulb fit to be buried, but surely no lily. Why be such a vaudevillian as to ask Terpsichore

to try a two-step in chains, or Salome to dance in a hobble skirt? However, Gleeson White has some strong backing for his views. Théophile Gautier, in an essay entitled "the Excellence of Poetry," says:

"Even granting that fine prose is as good as fine verse, which I deny, is the overcoming of all difficulties not to count for anything? * * * I am well aware that there are plenty of people who claim that difficulties should not be taken into account; yet what is art if it be not the means of overcoming the obstacles nature puts in the way of crystallization of thought."

And Andrew Lang, speaking of the ballade, quotes with approval another French writer, M. Lemaître, as follows:

"The poet who begins a ballade does not know very exactly what he will put into it. The rhyme, and nothing but the rhyme, will whisper things unexpected and charming, things he would never have thought of but for her, all united in the disorder of a dream. Nothing, indeed, is richer in suggestion than the strict laws of these difficult pieces; they force the fancy to wander afield, hunting high and low, and while she seeks through all the world that foot that can wear Cinderella's slipper, she makes delightful discoveries by the way."

Such a poet I would sooner liken to a caterpillar as he goes creeping now this way, now that, among a mass of verbiage, seeking a passable route by which he may arrive at some place not in view and unguessed of at the beginning of his tour. Hear, rather, what Bandelaire says:

"A good author is already thinking of his last line as he is penning his first."

From a height one may overlook the whole of a forest which he is to traverse on his way to an intended goal, and he may see the goal also, without seeing the flowers that will lie in his path, or even all the trees. Thus I agree that seldom can any poem worth while be commenced the end of which is not already determined in the writer's mind. But of course "things unexpected and charming," as Lemaître says, may be met with on the tangled way from the first to the last verse. Nevertheless, a true poem is conceived in a moment; at the moulding and lining of it a man may take his time. And this must be as true of a ballade as of any other form of poem. Maintaining this for the content of such a ballade, I have felt that as to tone the modification made by Rossetti of different rhymes for different stanzas will be found more harmonious in our language than the restricted French method of construction, and with some natural diffidence I have attempted to show cause.

The Rossetti form of ballade consists of three stanzas of eight lines and a closing quatrain, each line turning on four accents without regard to syllables. Accent, or stress, as declared by Coleridge, and always tacitly recognized by Scottish and English poets, is the one essential feature of verse in English.

I would emphasize this here, because of the position taken by Edgar Allan Poe in his "Rationale of Verse." Said Poe, discussing the laws of verse:

"Thus scanned, the line will seem musical. It is—highly so. And it is because there is no end to instances of just such lines of apparently incom-

prehensible music that Coleridge thought fit to invent his nonsensical system of what he calls scanning by accents, as if scanning by accents were anything more than a phrase. Wherever Christabel is really not rough it can be as readily scanned by the true laws of verse as can be the simplest pentametre of Pope. And where it is rough (*passim*) these same laws will enable any one of common sense to show why it is rough, and to point out instantaneously the remedy for the roughness."

He said that. But he knew better. As if a line could *seem* musical! If it *seems* musical it *is* musical. If it *seems* a sound it *is* a sound. If it *seems* a pain it *is* a pain. In this sort of thing the *seeming* is the *fact*. Whether or no a line be musical is decided by the ear, and only the ear, and your own ear at that, so far as you are concerned. As if any part of Christabel were rough! I want to say right here that if by these laws of verse Christabel is rough, then by Christabel these laws are no laws to me! I wonder at Poe, in his few lines so voluminous—so high and unencumbered; in exposition so carping and tightly scholastic! Perhaps because of being an out and out Latin who for once, in the shuffle of things, was given British blood and American birth. Unpoetic pedagogues early imposed on Poe, as on countless pupils before him, the notion that verse is some affair of syllables spaced off in proportional relation so as to justify a number of ugly Greek names adopted to denominate their dimensions. From almost any nonsense it seems one can make a science; often even an art. These foot-bound pedants! They lead a pupil through a stanza as if he were a blind man count-

ing and measuring his steps with a stick. They should be flung out of our schools. They make dry bones of poetry; they encourage verse among the young. When, for his relief, a poet feels he must write verse, then better for him to lean entirely on his ear for direction; in the flow of his pleasure refusing to know dactyl from pterodactyl, iambus from omnibus, anapest from any other pest.

Speaking of accent: I can speak no foreign language, but if there be, as I am told, languages so luckless as to be spoken without accent, in the sense I mean accent, then I vaguely understand the necessity for verse in such languages being determined, regulated, differentiated, by quantity and character of syllables. English, being a heavily accented language, cannot have applied to it with any propriety the rules of prosody intended to bind a less-accented or non-accented language. Among ourselves verse, to be excusable, must sound well in our own ears. If it do that, and have a modicum of sense, it will pass. Such sound will be the compounded sound produced, not by tabulated syllables, but by rhythm, flow, and the periodicity had from accent, whether such accent be plump on one syllable, or run along three together. But to return to our lesson:

In all respects, except disregard of syllables and variation of rhyme-tones for each stanza, allowing only for the same tone in each third line before the refrain, the Rossetti form of ballade follows the French form first hereinbefore described. In Rossetti's "Ballad of Dead Ladies" many of the rhymes are oblique; some to the extent of being mere assonances. But in this poem they have a rich sweetness as of choice dried fruits. In the

closing quatrain Rossetti even repeats the same word in lieu of a rhyme. No matter, his work in this case has grace by its very freedom; the effect is complete. Speaking generally as to the closing quatrain, or envoy, I think it should not perforce be addressed to any particular person; neither should it be regarded as the climax or peroration of the poem. Rather let it be heard as the closing chord, the final echo. That is about all I would say concerning ballades.

Most guitar players are familiar with the old Spanish mode of tuning their instrument. It is still used for some fandangoes and special pieces. But in general a better effect is had by the modern mode of longer intervals between the open strings. And the instrument is still a guitar. I say this because in Quebec one has ventured to vary the villanelle with altered interval and added rhyme, practically compressing the Italian third rhyme scheme into villanelle form. I submit four such in this book; also three mirelles, using a local form, five stanzas of five lines linked.

The few who care about these punctilious forms may look askance at any alteration of them; doubtless the many who are indifferent to them will think we make much ado about nothing. For the general public, rightly enough, is as little concerned for the technicalities of verse as for the classifications of the conchologist. Major, minor, minimus, the chief trouble with poets apart from being hard put to it for a living, is that they take themselves too seriously; a feeling they share with other artists and a few lone priests, prospectors, explorers, inventors, and all such fellows in love with Will o' the Wisp, and the like of him. And

yet perhaps it is only out of loyalty to their ideal that they trouble to lay emphasis on themselves in a world so overcrowded with respectable materialists. Addressing said materialists Théophile Gautier, in his essay, "The Utility of Poetry," puts in a plea for himself and his kind this way:

"Write prose as much as you please, but let us write verse. Plant potatoes, but do not pull up tulips. Fatten geese, but do not wring the necks of nightingales. * * * You fancy that happiness consists in properly cooked beef-steaks and sound electoral laws. I think highly of both these things, but comfort is not enough. Every select organization must have art, must have beauty, must have form."

And in his other essay, "The Excellence of Poetry," from which I have already quoted, he says:

"Poets are fit to do other things beside rhyming in verse, although I fail to see what better a man can do than write good verse."

That to me sounds right and reasonable enough. But on the other hand a scientific old friend of mine, feeling called upon to speak encouragingly of some verse I had written, said to me recently: "By George, sir, it's fine; I understood every bit of it; it's just as clear as prose!" To me much of his prose was never clear; to me his technical words and phrases conveyed scarce any clear-cut image, and I could not follow their application. He honestly intended what he said to me for a compliment, and I suppose it was—of a sort. But I know that he would not value a cathedral or mosque solely for its seating capacity or acoustic properties; he has the higher sense of architecture. I know that he would not think to praise a painter by telling

him that his work was as good as a photograph; and I am sure that observing a rock crystal and an ordinary lump of quartz he would appreciate the intrinsic beauty of form apart from substance. But to any effect in poetic form apart from literal meaning he would appear imperceptive as a clam; built that way, perhaps, or like enough a result of being pestered in youth with metrical versions of the Psalms, or of being made to memorize verse by the yard when he should have been at play. And all the while there is so much verse and so little poetry. This because the form is symbolic, and the content is seldom worthy of the form.

I am groping when I say symbolic. I think what I mean is that the mere arrangement, as well as choice, of words, apart from literal meaning, may be such as to vibrate overtones and undertones of meaning otherwise imperceptible; may induce thin, faint intellections unattainable by ordinary plain statement, however precise or logical. And I say the subject is not essential. Something of the poetic principle may glint through the exposition of any subject, from marmalade down to metaphysics, no matter how profound. Whether in prose or verse it will be the way of saying it that makes the poetry. One might even handle mathematics, and add some glamor to that form of mysticism. I would not say for sure, because in that field all my life I have not been acquainted with much beyond subtraction, but for all that I believe I could write a cantel on the root of minus one, and give it an air. I say this hat in hand, because of what may seem the contrary opinion of Edgar Allan Poe, than whom, concerning the poetic principle, I admit no higher authority.

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From a letter to his friend B——, written from West Point in 1831, I make this extract:

"To sum up this long rigmarole I have, what you no doubt perceive, for the metaphysical poets, as poets, the most sovereign contempt."

But when he wrote that he was hot from trouncing Wordsworth, and exposing the inane trash in some of Wordsworth's verse, being provoked thereto by the English poet's sassenach attack on Ossian. In his essay on "The Poetic Principle" Poe alludes to "the heresy of the Didactic," and justly protests against the idea that "every poem should inculcate a moral." It would be as appropriate to say that every poem should incorporate a joke. Poe goes on to say:

"It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem with advantage. * * * But the true artist will contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that Beauty which is the atmosphere and real essence of the poem."

Impossible to put that better. But I do wish Poe could have read the quatrains of Omar through Fitzgerald; I wish he had had the chance to thrill to poetry in the highest, created from the didactic and metaphysical debris of old Persia.

Much has been said about the true poet. The thick-thinking multitude has some anemic caricature of a man in mind. The pedagogue finds a poet in one who writes verse according to college standards, and which may safely be given to children and sophomores to study. For the moralist a true poet is one who writes verse which may serve to lead us all in the rigid paths of righteousness, as

such paths are indicated by that particular moralist. But the wise ones know the true poet will not bother himself about anything of the sort. And he will be far more concerned with cutting and clearing his way to higher reaches of feeling than he will be with the writing of verse. As he frees himself from the clinging of the lower levels so to that degree he ceases being an egotist, but he does not for that become an altruist. He does not belong to the order of those who, in the deceitful name of duty, delight to sacrifice themselves, and others. What he obtains he does not all keep to himself, but in the giving he has no more of merit than has a rose in shedding its perfume. In his loneliness he will be thinking neither of your welfare nor his own. He is liable to fall over precipices, and into chasms, and come hideously to himself. Yet, in so far as he succeeds, he makes the way easier for others below; a way by which they may even here, in the span between the moments, hold converse with immortals. Such a poet does greater work for the world than the world knows. He does greater work than shows in his verse. At best his verse is only a more or less valuable by-product of venturings on the heights and in the depths; something to be occasionally enjoyed by those born or schooled to enjoy such things. But from his striving and achieving others may gain who know nothing of him or his verse. While in the feel of it he grows indifferent to the praise or blame of persons. He goes for the time beyond the vanity of himself. And, like the sincere child and the great traveller, he would rather live it than write it. There have been, and there may be, great poets who leave to the world no visible

sign, no lasting word, when they pass; yet from whose secret and carefully concealed moods, from whose ardent intrusions and seizures in spans beyond ordinary cognition, the mass have a downthrow of fragrance for which they have no adequate name, but which gives them an obscure, stubborn assurance of things desirable beyond life as they know it, and which, in face of all damnable evidence to the contrary, heartens them to say: *Yes, but there is something else beyond all that!*

The world may well weary of its versifiers who fancy poetry to be only a show of words strung together in some syncopated fashion. And it will be better than a joke to say that the world may well be grateful for its wordless poets, who neither work for, nor care for, the world, howl or exult as it may, but from whose silent endeavoring the world receives a great benison. The knowing of zen is without words; the telling of zen is in contempt of names.

Nevertheless, one may try to indicate the symbolic value of form.

Here is a test: If what has been expressed in verse would lose its virtue in prose—if it cannot be given such effective utterance in prose—then such verse is poetry. Otherwise, it is only something which may be as good as prose, but which usually is not. Yet I will have no quarrel with those who cannot perceive the symbolic value of form in verse; nor for that matter will I quarrel with any of my few good friends to whom these roundabout rhymes which I have written are mere eccentricities to be quietly ignored on account of more understandable doings with which they

credit me. Mudpouts in their mud may have more common-sense than simple, silver flying-fish that skim above the sea. But they have not so wide a sense of the world. The daily mind which capitulates in daylight to the obvious may regard poetry as but some dopy attempt to escape the disenchantment of the actual; at best an attempt to create more of color and of romance than the world holds. But great poetry, and all great art, is not a creation. It is a recollection; a pitifully inadequate recollection out of a very present which plays parallel with the diurnal; unconcernedly interlacing the interstices of this articulated time of ours; by rare chance flashing in contact across our customary breathing and awareness and common-sense. The only creation about great art is our trivial weaving of sounds and shapes and colors wherewith to hold some impress of recollections slipping away. Those of us who in shining consciousness roam the spaces of night may retain a brief sense of high lights in the immeasurable. But soon daylight is flung in a filmy veil across our sky, and the stars are hidden from us. Exasperated, we make pin-wheels and rockets and fire them against the plain reason of the sun. Wingless ordinaries of intellect may stop to examine our pin-wheels, and may explain them most scientifically. Nevertheless the stars remain.

After all, we had as well be frank about it, and not pretend to enjoy any phase of art through which the light does not come to us. In art, as in the other practices designed to relieve human hunger or pain—cooking, religion, medicine—we had best be guided simply by the effect upon our own selves. Holding fast to principles

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I would move loosely among rules whenever any question of beauty is involved. Because beauty is beyond the rim of all that binds us. Between breaths some become aware of what beauty means. And of these some know that although all your high beliefs may crumble, though every religion and upholding orthodoxy may fail you on its rock foundation, though all that makes you think life worth living, and living well, may crash into the dust, yet let one twinkle of beauty come and conquer its way into your heart, and you willing as a child or a bird to be glad in it for itself, then and there you have enough for that hope and that faith which needs no buttress of book or tradition or science or babble of men. It matters not who says this; there is no call to be solemn over it. Beauty goes sparkling on its way; flowing from one form into another; remoulding the refuse of death. Even in the dark one may find by it the fair way beyond. I had this of a green parrot who remembered out of the blue air where it was born, years and years ago in the Orange Islands. Beauty is something too divine for definition; it will tolerate no limitation or criterion; it is the one thing supreme above all that we conceive as truth, utility or morality; and wherever and however perceived, it is not the mode of perceiving which should engross us, but the fact; the fact that we are privileged above other animals, some of us, to become aware of beauty in any degree at all is the most heartening and hopeful thing in life.

Ottawa, October, 1912.

BALLADE OF YOUTH REMAINING

PARDON if I ravel rhyme
Out of my head disorderly!
Forgetting how the rats of time
Are nibbling at the bones of me!
But while upon my legs I'm free
Out in the sunlight I intend
To dine with God prodigiously:
Youth is a splendid thing to spend!

Here's to the man who travels still
In the light of young discoveries!
Here's to the fellow of lusty will,
Who drives along and hardly sees
For glamor of great realities
The doom of age! This line I send
To all who sing hot litanies:
Youth is a splendid thing to spend!

But 'tis not all a matter of years:
'Tis a way of living handily
In a game with Life, while yet appears
A glory near of victory;
With ventures high, and gallantry
Twinkling 'round the nearest bend
Where damsels and fine dangers be:
Youth is a splendid thing to spend!

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Fellows, come and ride with me
Swiftly now to the edge of the end,
Holding the Stars of Joy in fee!—
Youth is a splendid thing to spend!

BALLADE OF THE FREE LANCE

LET me face some bright hazard
Against this rowdy World for you!
A foe to strike, a friend to guard,
Or the looting of some rascal crew,
O, the like of this I'm taking to
As on my way I make advance,
And queer vicissitudes come through,
Full of adventure and multiple chance!

So far, you see, I've not been slain:
Tho' now and then I've sought to raid
Some richly opportune domain,
Only to find the plan I made
Baffled by engine or ambuscade:
But I salute the circumstance,
And slip aside; O the World is laid
Full of adventure and multiple chance!

And while I'm free to ride ahead,
With here or there some prize in view,
Few dangers of the way I dread,
Tho' oft my hungriness I rue:

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Still, betimes a crust will do
Cracking fine to nonchalance,
And every day the World is new,
Full of adventure and multiple chance!
For me the road of many directions—
For me the rhyme of long romance!
For me the World of imperfections—
Full of adventure and multiple chance!

BALLADE OF ACTION

No fat security hath charms
To keep me always satisfied:
What ho! Excursions and alarms!
A scheme, a plot, a ripping tide
Of rude events to prick my pride,
Or crack the shell of my conceit
Upon the edge of things untried!
This is the fate that I would meet.
Now let some bully thing intrude,
And bugle to the soul of me!
I grow stale with quietude,
And this too safe monotony:
O good my friend or enemy
Call me back to the battling street!
For high low variety—
This is the fate that I would meet.
To more than keep oneself alive
Is the way to live when all is said:
To sight a prize, and chase and strive
With strong will and cunning head
For something surely more than bread,
Or from the bitter steal the sweet,
And steal it while the risk is red—
This is the fate that I would meet.

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To conquer finely, or to sink
Debonair against defeat,
This is the rarest grace I think—
This is the fate that I would meet.

BALLADE OF DETACHMENT

THE Lords of Karma deal the cards,
But the game we play in our own way:
Now as for me, and as regards
The gain or loss from day to day,
I go detached; I mean to say
That I live largely as I please,
Whether it does or does not pay
Among the inequalities.

With duties not too much engrossed,
With profits not too much concerned,
Not to glean to the uttermost,
Nor grieve for what I might have earned,
This for my soul's sake I have learned,
Reaching for sweeter things than these:
Pennies and fractions I have spurned
Among the inequalities.

O, damnable palavering
Of pedagogues too regular!
I'd rather be a tramp, or sing
For my living at a bar,
Or peddle peanuts, far by far,
Than lose my reasonable ease
In tow of rule and calendar
Among the inequalities.

Content if I may go a bit
In my own way before I cease;
Living trimly by my wit
Among the inequalities.

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BALLADE ON THE WAY

LET saints abstract on subtle planes
Revolving occult theories,
Unravel all till naught remains,
And vanish then howe'er they please!
But as for me, in place of these,
The savor of flesh and blood! The zest
And blaze of vast idolatries!
This is the object of my quest.

Let saints who stoop to lift the woe
From off the living and the dead,
On with their heavy labors go
Till all be healed and comforted!
But as for me, I seek instead
Assurance to the sparkling crest
Of ecstasies unmerited!
This is the object of my quest.

Beauty to me hath been a name
Holier than all God's avatars:
The unconcerned, eternal Flame
Whose fitful gleams between the bars
Of space and time unto the stars
And outer vacancies attest
Elysium that nothing mars!
This is the object of my quest.

O, let me for a moment merge
Within the glory vaguely guessed!
Yea, tho' I perish on the verge,
This is the object of my quest.

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BALLADE OF GOOD WOMEN

WOMEN I value as they serve
Us men with all their qualities:
The kindly eye, the winsome curve,
And voice attune for melodies,
O, high we hold the worth of these!
But this is the best a man can say
Of factory girls or fine ladies:
Good women give themselves away.

So have our comforts much increased,
Despite the neuter maids who cling
To fad or fancy, book or priest,
Perversely 'gainst their fashioning:
Lord, in the end 'tis a sickly thing,
Still order it for us I pray
That mainly without reckoning
Good women give themselves away.

Let sing who will in praise of her
By some unique ambition led,
Queen at college or theatre,
Or classed in a convent with the dead!
I honor the girls who choose instead
The ancient duties, day by day,
As wives and mothers and makers of bread:
Good women give themselves away.

Little I care what they be doing,
What creed they follow or disobey,
If evermore for our renewing
Good women give themselves away.

BALLADE OF VIRTUES

WE make too much of right and wrong:
Three virtues sum it all, nor less
Nor more, and we who crawl along
By light of them our way may guess
Out of the world's ungodly mess,
Whether we look to the Cross, or whether
To idols of genial heatheness:
We who are all in the mud together.

Courage, cleanliness, charity:
There are no virtues fixt, but these:
On these, the sole essential three,
We base our rising tendencies,
And various moralities
To suit our age, or maybe the weather,
Or stress of chance necessities:
We who are all in the mud together.

Many to ancient names, and some
To newer creeds and altars cling:
But shining down the ages come
Three virtues, never altering,
By which alone our souls we bring
Out of the primal ooze and nether
Gulfs whence we are clambering:
We who are all in the mud together.

Courage, cleanliness, charity:
Hold by these to the end of the tether,
For only these may lead us free:
We who are all in the mud together.

BALLADE OF MEDDLERS

A PLAGUE on those who would regulate
Every detail of our troubled lives!
Let's eat and drink and fight and mate
And leave to God what then survives!
Thus every man for himself contrives
His inexact best quality:
Ministers, medicals, meddlesome wives,
Go your way and let folk be!

O anxious saviours of men and such
Thanks for your help in our evil plight!
But please don't save us all too much!
When God woke up and called for light
He set things turning from left to right,
A good enough sign it seems to me
That we shall turn thus without you—quite:
Go your way and let folk be!

For man and beast and imp and elf
One rule is writ in language terse:
Each must answer to himself
In the sequence of the universe:
And we may crawl from the primal curse
Fast if we choose, or leisurely,
But meddlers aye make matters worse:
Go your way and let folk be!

Maybe a helping hand is the best
Signal from God that ever we see:
But that's one thing, and for the rest,
Go your way and let folk be!

BALLADE OF FRIENDS

I CHANGE myself, and so no more
Will cry against inconstancy:
The chiefest pals I had of yore
Without offence may tire of me:
And they are free, and I am free,
To seek new faces down the line—
But yet I say wherever I be:
All good fellows are friends of mine!

No talk of race or caste or creed;
No fault of hair, no shade of skin,
Shall bar me of my choice, indeed
The sweetest nut may lie within
The toughest shell; 'twould be a sin
To lose a comrade, or resign
My company for cause so thin:
All good fellows are friends of mine!

They fail us now and then, of course;
And some are rascals, more or less:
Some cajole us to endorse,
And leave us in the lurch: O, yes;
But to relieve our loneliness
If only for a day is fine:
For that we owe them some, confess:
All good fellows are friends of mine!

Whether at sea or whether on shore,
Or at the job or over the wine,
Whether on two legs, whether on four—
All good fellows are friends of mine!

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BALLADE OF JACQUELINE

I MET by chance a milliner,
A girl by name of Jacqueline:
June-sweet was the voice of her,
And wonderful eyes of aquamarine,
Pale blue and pale green.
Appealed from her face of ivory,
Too wild to care how she were seen
Down town o' nights with me.

In a fussy shop thro' daylight hours
Trimly she fashioned vanities;
Scraps of birds, and crazy flowers,
Trifles of straw and fripperies,
To put on the heads of fine ladies:
But after six, when she was free,
Jacqueline went as you please
Down town o' nights with me.

Jacqueline was a good chum
For gay streets and vaudeville;
And I spent my coin, when I had some,
For the pleasure it was to see her feel
The light dream of the moment real,
Or harken awhile to her velvety
Low laughter, over a meal
Down town o' nights with me.

Jacqueline has gone away
To marry a man of property;
Jacqueline no more will play
Down town o' nights with me.

BALLADE OF THE PICAROON

I KNEW him for a picaroon
Among the purlieus of the town:
At free lunch in a beer saloon
To wash the cheese and pickles down,
With pretzels hard and salt and brown,
We drank and talked of all our schemes
To banish Fortune's chronic frown:
He was a fine fellow of dreams.

He loved the light, piquant details
Of life beyond mere livelihood;
And while he covered many trails
More tricks he played and girls he wooed
And bottles emptied than he should
For that success the World esteems:
But after a fashion he made good:
He was a fine fellow of dreams.

Because I heard his death to-night
Told in the hotel corridor
I left the crowd for the cool starlight
And the lone ways: my heart was sore
That I should see his face no more
Where the wheel turns, and the light gleams,
And the air reels to the World's uproar:
He was a fine fellow of dreams.

My friend he was and he died too soon:
'Tis always too soon for his like it seems:
But he lived while he lived, that picaroon—
He was a fine fellow of dreams.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

VILLANELLE OF MUTTON

VERY sick and tired I am
Of stewed prunes, and apples dried,
And this our mutton that once was lamb!

I will make no grand salaam
For the stale cakes the gods provide!
Very sick and tired I am!

My indignant diaphragm
Would cover something fresh, untried,—
Not this mutton that once was lamb!

How every verse and epigram
Of hope the lagging years deride!
Very sick and tired I am!

Must I always then be calm,
And talk as one quite satisfied
With this our mutton that once was lamb?

Frankly, I don't give a dam
For taste of things too long denied!
Very sick and tired I am
Of this our mutton that once was lamb!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

MIRELLE OF FOUND MONEY

I GOT a thousand dollars to-day
By chance and undeservedly:
But nary a one of my debts will I pay:
Sure it never was meant to be spent that
way:
'Tis a gift from my fairy godmother, you see.

Except, of course, to my landlady,
And some on account to the tailor Malone:
And there'll be a new dress, and a hat maybe,
For the lame girl who is good to me:
But the rest of these dollars are all my own.

A thousand dollars and all for my own:
The thought of it runs like a tune through
my head:
So long it is since I have known
One lavish hour, one fully blown
Rose of joy unheralded!

Tho' we of the world must grind for bread
'Tis a plan I hold in small esteem:
And while I can taste I let no dread
Of later want contract the spread
Of my desire for cakes and cream.

Wrapt in myself, obscure, supreme,
I slip thro' streets and quarters gay,
And the comic crowd I see in a dream,
But glory be—this is no dream:
I got a thousand dollars to-day!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

BALLADE OF FINE EATING

HIGH up I climbed in a cherry tree:
Heigho, how the years have fled!
June and the World lay under me,
While the juicy fruit just overhead
Hung clustering, thick and ripe and red—
For a boy of ten 'twas a glorious sight:—
Say, do you wonder now that I said:
Bully for my big appetite?

Far in the North I sought for gold:
Foolish I was and most unfit:
Starving, alone, and numb with cold,
When I found on the trail a dog-biscuit:
How I gnawed its edges bit by bit!
'Twas a savory thing to crunch and bite,
And I fed on every crumb of it:
Bully for my big appetite!

But give me a friend this night for a feast,
And one well-served exquisite dish!
He may have what he will of bird or beast,
Or take his choice of fat sea-fish;
And we'll drink of the best thing liquorish,
Bottled in years of old delight,
To wake on our palate the lost relish:
Bully for my big appetite!

Me for a nook in a fine kafay,
With any potvaliant rake to-night!
And if to-morrow the Devil's to pay—
Bully for my big appetite!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

MIRELLE OF THE GOOD BED

THERE's nothing so good as a good bed
When a body is over and done with day!
I'd like a place to lay my head
In a clean room, unfrequented
And dark, unless for a moon-ray.

O, Angel of Dreams, without delay
Then let me from this World be gone!
Within a temple I would pray
Where golden odors float always
Onward to oblivion.

Or haply may I be withdrawn
From pain and care and manners mean
Into some fairy tower whereon
The glim, bejewelled gonfalon
Of blue enchantery is seen!

But a lady. I know might come between
Laughing, and lead me far astray
On the flowery edge of a wild ravine
Where wild cascades of waters green
Flash in the pleasant light of May.

Thus let me dream the night away,
Or slumber dreamless with the dead!
Life may resume, but now I say,
Being too weary of the day,
There's nothing so good as a good bed!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

BALLADE OF THE HOUSE OF EASE

HELLO, MARIE! You sweet, old girl,
You of the Province cool and true,
I'm fagged and done with the City whirl,
And I've come for quieting to you!
I'm out of the game, Marie; I'm through,
And want but a chair in the sunlight placed,
With nothing to do, dear, nothing to do—
Give me now these hours to waste!

Something to eat? Well, after a while
I'd like a chicken fricassee
Creamed in good Acadian style
With ketchup and things peppery,
And a twist of bread and pot o' tea:
A supper that to the Queen's taste
If you will cook it! But, Marie,
Give me now these hours to waste!

My Lady in your House of Ease,
Clean of all pretence and mask,
Let me lounge just as I please,
Tossing from me every task!
Let me like some lizard bask
Fatly with my soul effaced
In the sun! No more I ask—
Give me now these hours to waste!

For I've been troubled overlong,
And I'd be quit of stress and haste,
And quit of doing, right or wrong—
Give me now these hours to waste!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

BALLADE OF GOLDEN DAYS

I WEARY of living from hand to mouth,
Battling for mean necessities:
I'm in a desert, and a drouth
Comes over all the oases
Where I have sought myself to ease
In lawful and unlawful ways:
I had no care for things like these
Far away in the Golden Days.

Let me go where my father went—
My father who was good to me!
This World has grown so virulent
And sodden now with misery!
But once we fought it joyously,
Ever on some crusade ablaze
For spicy isles o' the wind-swept sea—
Far away in the Golden Days.

O, with some glad intoxicant
These wasted nerves of mine relieve!
Do me a magic, and enchant
These sordid chambers to conceive
In crimson colors, while I weave
My fancies to the airy phase
Of things he taught me to believe—
Far away in the Golden Days.

Nay, what now? What aura strange—
What glamor of new life allays
This old despair? Again I range
Far away in the Golden Days.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

DEFEAT

Villanelle

WE may dream of what hath been,
But this will alter all our ways:
This is the thing that was not foreseen.

Tho' we avoid the rabble gaze
Yet must we keep some face to show:
We are untouched, the World says.

Haply the World may never know
The marish grief and bitterness
That covers us; 'tis better so.

For we who gloried to excess
Now only ask that none may see
These hours averted, comfortless.

Of our defeat there yet may be
Some grey reward in after days:
O, ache my heart—but quietly!

While the shadow with us stays
We may dream of what hath been;
But this will alter all our ways—
This is the thing that was not foreseen.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

FORTY

I.

BILLY, I seem this late October day
To hear the toll of some dull-throated bell!
They're calling time on me, and the game's to play:
But what the hell, Bill—what the hell!

II.

Let me alone awhile! I want to stay
Unanxious for an hour o'er what's ahead:
I'll make no vow at forty; this birthday
We'll give to memories of the Past instead.

III.

Turn back thirty years! Sit down and try
To call the times we had, the things we said,
The fresh sweet taste of life so long gone by,
When you and I and Dick, and others dead,

IV.

Made great romance beneath a Western sky,
Living thro' all the Seasons presently:
Then was no Past, and for the Future—why
That was a treasure-cave of things to be.

V.

Now you have won a name and places high,
And little Dick has grown so great and grey:
The luckier ones are seen no more, while I
Go wandering an unprofitable way.

VI.

Last year, at Ottawa, I mind Noël,
After each story that you told, would say,
Drinking old brandy in that old hotel,
"La vie est triste, mon brave—soyons gai!"

VII.

And that's a song for all, when all is said:
Billy, I'd like to be in some café
With some of those choice fellows that you've led
And put a purple finish to this day.

VIII.

Tho' I'm no inky pessimist, nor bred,
When I am hurt, to howl against the sky,
Yet there be times I turn a troubled head,
And for one hour of rich abandon sigh.

IX.

But let it go! To all I've had to say
Hear that dull-throated bell make one reply!
Half-time, is call'd for me, and the game's to play,
And still I've made no score—no score—yet I

X.

Have many dreams like jewels hid away,
And many love me—more than I can tell:
And my heart is warm to all my friends this day,—
So what the hell, Bill—what the hell!

NULLA BONA

Villanelle

THERE seems no good alternative:
I must do what I deplore:
I mean well, but I mean to live.

By corners now I dodge furtive;
From debts I slip thro' many a door:
There seems no good alternative.

Maybe I'll rise superlative
Some day my credit to restore:
I mean well, but I mean to live.

Gone like water thro' a sieve
Is all the cash I won of yore:
There seems no good alternative.

Sure, if I had it I would give
Freely to friend and creditor:
I mean well, but I mean to live.

But now, alas, a fugitive
I must fly to another shore:
There seems no good alternative—
I mean well, but I mean to live.

TO MY LADY IN DISTRESS

Villanelle

SWEET my Lady, dry your eyes!
Tho' now I seem to serve you ill
My kingdom in the future lies.

Let evil stars in evil skies
Combine our happiness to kill—
Sweet my Lady, dry your eyes!

My heart is set on high emprise,
And there are ways to fortune still:
My kingdom in the future lies.

Some day with golden, glad surprise
The fairy heart of you I'll thrill:
Sweet my Lady, dry your eyes!

Then from this dingy life you'll rise
To a palace on a hill:
My kingdom in the future lies.

I fight a dragon for that prize:
I'll break the dragon's head, I will!
Sweet my Lady, dry your eyes—
Our kingdom in the future lies!

GOOD-BYE

Villanelle

ALL things are reapt beneath the sky,
And I'll be gone before the year:
Girl, in October we say good-bye!

Remember how the May was mere
With white and green and violet!
Remember all that followed, dear!

How June, with wreath and coronet
Of many roses amorous
Led us dreaming deeper yet!

Thro' red July victorious
To August, ample, passionate!
No lovers e'er had more than us.

Now bronze September soon will set:
I want no life extended drear
Till Youth and Summer we forget.

O Autumn, haunted, sweet and sere!
All things are reapt beneath the sky!
And I'll be gone before the year:
Girl, in October we say good-bye!

LADY OF VENTURES

Mirelle

LADY of Ventures weaving gold
From next to nothing tell me, pray,
Some novel thing to do! Unfold
Some fine employ or project bold
Or sly detour along my way!

From London town to far Cathay
The many live in drab durance:
But evermore your colors play,
Lady of Ventures, grave or gay,
Over the regions of Romance.

And some who find you sideways glance,
Nor scorn to reach thro' gates obscure
Forbidden vistas that entrance,
And glimmer with caprice and chance
To alter destinies grown dour.

Whether to some moonlit amour,
Or quest of hidden treasury,
Or valiant or outlandish lure,
They follow you, and think for sure
'Tis worth whatever the cost may be.

Thro' drear lanes of poverty,
Thro' little shops, and garrets old,
I've seen you wander truantly,
And pass tiptoe, and beckon me—
O Lady of Ventures weaving gold!

CHINATOWN CHANT

I go down to Dupont Street
See my very good friend:
I have something good to eat
With my very good friend:
Feel damblue and want some fun,
Play fantan with Wun Fat Bun,
He think me just Number One,
He my very good friend.

Yum poi—I no care!
Yum poi—you no care!
Sometime good time alla time maybe!
We no care—yum poi!

Hello, how do, come in, sit down!
You my very good friend!
You come best place in Chinatown,
You my very good friend!
Too much cold and rain in street,
You look sick, me stand you treat,
Fix up something good to eat
For my very good friend.

Yum poi—I no care!
Yum poi—you no care!
Sometime good time alla time maybe!
We no care—yum poi!

S'pose you like some extra-dry,
You my very good friend:
S'pose you like some bolo-guy,
You my very good friend!

Birdnest soup and some shark-fin,
Bamboo-stick in chicken-wing,
Mushroom stew with everything
For my very good friend.

Yum poi—I no care!
Yum poi—you no care!
Sometime good time alla time maybe!
We no care—yum poi!

Plenty eat and plenty drink
For my very good friend!
You stay here all night, I think,
You my very good friend!
I lock fast big outside door,
Have best time you had before,
Sing-song girlie come some more
For my very good friend.

Yum poi—I no care!
Yum poi—you no care!
Sometime good time alla time maybe!
We no care—yum poi!

Sing-song girlie dance for you,
Sing, my very good friend!
No more now you feel damblue,
Sing, my very good friend!
Too much drink and too much fun
Just enough for Number One,
You know nothing when you done,
O my very good friend!

Yum poi—I no care!
Yum poi—you no care!
Sometime good time alla time maybe!
We no care—yum poi!

ZALINKA

1

Last night in a land of triangles,
I lay in a cubicle, where
A girl in pyjamas and bangles
Slept with her hands in my hair.

2

I wondered if either or neither
Of us were properly there,
Being subject to queer aberations—
Astral and thin aberrations—
Which leave me no base to compare:
No adequate base to compare:
But her hands, with their wristful of bangles,
Were certainly fast in my hair,
While the moon made pallid equations
Thro' a delicate window there.

3

I was glad that she slept for I never
Can tell what the finish will be:
What enamoured, noturnal endeavor
May end in the killing of me:
But, in the moonlit obscure
Of that silken, somniferous lair,
Like a poet consumed with a far lust
Of things unapproachably fair
I fancied her body of stardust—
Pounded of spices and stardust—
Out of the opulent air.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

4

Then, the moon, with its pale liquidations,
Fell across her in argentine bars,
And I thought: This is fine—but to-morrow
What cut of Dawn's cold scimitars
Will sever my hold on this creature—
I mean of this creature on me?
Amorous creature of exquisite aura—
Marvel of dark glamorie.

5

What joy of folly then followed
Is beyond my expression in rhyme:
And I do not expect you to grasp it
When I speak of expansions of time:
Of reaching and zooming serenely
As it were at right angles to time:
Knowing well you will think, on your level,
This was only a dream indiscreet—
Or experience quite indiscreet:
But little I care, in this instance,
What you do or do not think discreet:
O utterance futile, but sweet,
Like a parrot I pause and repeat,
In delight of my own, and for nothing,
To myself I repeat and repeat:

6

Last night in a land of triangles,
I lay in a cubicle where
A girl in pyjamas and bangles
Slept with her hands in my hair.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

LAUGHTER

GLORY be, the corner is turned,
And we've given the slip to the old Hoodoo!
Come, Moriarty, I think we've earned
The right to loaf, don't you?
Our score is paid, and we've money galore,
Enough to last us a month or more,
And never a thing to do!
You're hungry you say? Well, I am too,
But stroll this way for half a mile,
Sure the sun is good this afternoon,
Good for a pasty-faced gossoon!
Like you, d'ye hear, Moriarty?
Aye, 'tis a blessed afternoon
For you, ye prison-faced gossoon!
And you're lucky that some are dead!
I'm talking too loud? Aw—go on!
That red liquor has gone to my head,
But I know what I'm doing I tell you!
There's none in this town that you're frightened to meet
And I'm not the sort that would sell you.
But your hungry you say—you want to eat?
Well, come with me to Easy Street,
And I'll show you a tavern to your taste—
To your taste, d'ye hear, Moriarty?

* * * * *

Aw, take your time, boy! What's the haste?
There, where you see that ugly baste
Ayont the Barbecue,
Where the lettering is half erased,
'Twas gold when it was new.
Make out that name there if you can
With your cock-eye: *The Black-and-Tan*:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

That's it: 'tis kept by a Mexican,
And that's were we dine, Moriarty!
It has a long, deep-raftered room
In the Mission style; 'tis a man's room.
And sure you'll like this Mexican,
A fellow to follow a light amour,
A picaroon and a troubadour,
Much of your sort, Moriarty!

* * * * *

Hey, Miguel! Come hear me tell
This hungry friend of mine
How this joint of yours is for epicures
Who like a shady place to dine!
See this long, deep-raftered room,
Half alight and half in gloom,
And yonder a cactus red in bloom,
Just to your taste, Moriarty!
Somehow it puts me in mind of Yvette:
You remember—little Yvette?
Will you ever forget that night when she
 trackt us
Into the old Savoy, and cried
For us to take her East again,
And we hadn't the price—and then—and
 then—
All right, Miguel, by the window here:
That horrible rope—it turns me queer
To think of it yet—poor little Yvette—
She always was fond of a cactus!
Yes, beer, Moriarty, beer!
Then order whatever you wish—a dish—
Of chowder, perhaps a sole,
Or some foreign thing en casserole,
They're great on that line here!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

You leave it to me? Well, on the whole
Of things come far and things come near
I fancy an onion omelette
 With bacon on the side!
Or what do you say to a steak Creole
 With sweet potatoes fried?
 You like these things done Spanish,
 And it isn't a Friday yet?
New raisins then and a pint of port
To finish on; they say 'tis good
To iron the blood of a broken sport,
 And they keep it here in the wood.

* * * * *

Moriarty, what are ye thinking of?
Be easy, lad! By the lovely dove,
Myself—I could sit in this place for hours!
Those red flowers in the window set
Where the wind gets at them—damn it all
To me they seem to lift and fall
Like the red skirts of little Yvette,
 When she danced at the carnival!
Moriarty, lad, if we only knew—
Eh? O, yes! That's all—thank you—
That's all, Miguel, thank you—thank you—
 But serve it up hot and Spanish!
And now while I roll me a cigarette
 Tune up that old guitar
 And sing while we wait, Moriarty!
Sing new songs, and sing till you banish
Out of my heart this grey regret;
 Sure that's what you're for, Moriarty!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Sing new songs to that old guitar
Of things come near and things come far,
While I forget, forget, forget,
Watching the rings from my cigarette
Rise to the rafters and vanish!

* * * * *

Watching the rings! How each of them altars!
Each of them alters and alters—and alters—
Moriarty!—see—they're swinging like halters
Just over our heads as they climb!
And after—and after—and after—
Christ! hear that devilish laughter—
That devilish gurgle and laughter!
And there!—see there how each rafter
Is red—dripping red all the time!

* * * * *

No, no, Miguel—I'm well, man—I'm well!
My nerves, that's all! It's passing—this spell:
Moriarty can tell—there's nothing to tell!
Roll me another cigarette,
And sing, damn you! Sing and forget
That laughter—ghost laughter—hereafter!

LONE WOLF LAMENT

DRINK if you will to happy days
And things to be—but say,
Where are the fellows I used to know?
Where are my friends to-day?

Wow! Hear me howl!
For Shad and Pete and George and Jack
Who took the long trail and left no track:

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

O, never a one of them all comes back,
 And the winter-time is here!
 Wow! Hear me howl!
For Olive and June and white Irene,
And the Mexican Kid and little Corinne:
Daughters of joy who have not been seen
 This many and many a year!
I'm a lone old wolf, and I've lost my pack,
 And the winter-time is here:
 Wow! Hear me howl!

Many are gay and many are fair,
 And some still come at my call:
But I've gone lame, and can run no more,
 So what's the use of it all?

I dreamed last night I ran with them
 Under a gold-red sky,
Where the mountains rose from the green
 prairie—
And I woke and wisht to die.

Drink if you will, and drink on me!
 But this is the toast I give:
Live hard with your pack and live yourselves
 out—
Then ask no more to live.

Wow! Hear me howl!
For Shad and Pete and George and Jack
Who took the long trail and left no track:
O, never a one of them all comes back,
 And the winter-time is here!
 Wow! Hear me howl!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

For Olive and June and white Irene,
And the Mexican Kid and little Corinne:
Daughters of joy who have not been seen
 This many and many a year!
I'm a lone old wolf and I've lost my pack,
 And the winter time is here!
 Wow! Hear me howl!

BALLADE OF THE BODY DISEASED

To think the sky should be so blue,
 And the air still yield its clean caress!
That I should see these flowers that strew
 The altar of God's loveliness
 And cease adoring now! Ah yes,
But something foul within me squirms
 A trail of bloody rottenness!
I will not live upon these terms.

Must I who had of youth and bliss
 In fullest measure be content
Merely to live in mire like this?
 Shall my remaining days be spent
 And my loved body now be lent
As stuff that alters or confirms
 Some medical experiment?
I will not live upon these terms.

I shall end it when I choose
 If it can end so easily!
Dripping Upas avenues
 Before me loom unhappily:
 Things magnified too monstrously
From infinite mephitic germs
 Are loosed on me indecently:
I will not live upon these terms.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

O stricken body, now for you
Decay, and the silent work of worms!
To think the sky should be so blue!
I will not live upon these terms.

ELYSIUM

Villanelle

MOTHER, for a moment come
To the bars that intervene:
Tell me of Elysium!

Tell me how you live serene
Upon that fair and lovely shore:
Free of grief and burdens mean!

For I so broken am and sore
To me God's mercy now 'twould seem
To die indeed and be no more.

You are with the Seraphim,
While below I wander on,
Groping through a fearful dream.

My love of life at last is gone:
Of life what favor may I glean
Outvaluing oblivion?

Here for dim relief I lean:
O, Mother, for a moment come
To the bars that intervene!
Unveil, unveil Elysium!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

JILL

1

DOCTOR, I want to be out of this:
There is no play nor profit here;
'Tis all so chemical and queer;
For things outworn or things I wish
Life now is stale, now feverish—
I cannot sleep.

2

A burden on my heart is lain
Of thin, delirious desires;
I feel the flash of eerie fires
In the cloudy opal of my brain;
I wish I knew some medicine
To cure it all.

3

There was a girl named Jill I met
Vacation time at Juniper,
And I was like a boy with her
Had never cared for women yet;
I mind how in the red sunset
She called to me.

4

Among the hills I heard her sing,
And in glad mood I went to her;
I thought the emerald glimmer
Of her slant eyes a magic thing;
Some oddness in her raimenting,
Some fashion old,

5

Just a touch on a simple gown
Of the silk of some past dynasty,
And she wore a collar of lace quaintly
At her tan throat; her hair was down;
Her shapely arms were bare and brown:
And she called to me.

6

O, she was a jolly hoyden, Jill!
But the savor of her lips to me
Was sweet as a late, wild strawberry
Found large and red on a sunburnt hill;
And I yielded to her pretty will
And waywardness.

7

Give me the fine, cool touch of her!
I've had my fill of sweets and sour
With merry lovers of late hours,
And little now my pulses stir
For game, or dance, or theatre,
Or deep carouse.

8

I think to live with such a lass
Were better than the best of these:
Unfailing as the field daisies,
And clean and constant as the grass:
All green delight young summer has
I found in her.

9

Now I nor wine nor women prize;
But I'd follow you up any hill
For just a pail of water, Jill,
And the right to look in your slant eyes
Till life grew strong and sane and wise
For me again.

10

But a burden on my heart is lain
Of thin, delirious desires;
I feel the flash of eerie fires
In the cloudy opal of my brain;
I wish I knew some medicine
To cure it all.

11

Doctor, if I could hear her sing
As 'mong the hills at Juniper
I think this pestilent fever
Would pass like vapor scattering
Before a breeze, or else something
Come fine as that!

12

For even just to think of her
Is grateful to me as the prime
Glory of the morning-time;
A memory in lavender
Of youth foot-loose in a wide summer
She is to me.

13

Doctor, I need to be free, I guess!
Free to go once more to her
Among the hills in the white clover
And share in her cool waywardness;
'Twould cure me of this dull sickness,
And I would sleep.

14

Yes, I would sleep with a sleep supreme
Till all that frets me now were gone;
And I would wake in young fashion
To healthy ways of hill and stream,
And all the joy of life would seem
To be with Jill.

15

So handsome she is in the hill-country!
Set in her sunbrowned face slant-wise,
Doctor, she has green, glorious eyes;
Oh, if I were only free,
If I could rise of God's mercy.
And go to her!

16

But a burden on my heart is lain
Of thin, delirious desires;
I feel the flash of eerie fires
In the cloudy opal of my brain;
I wish I knew some medicine
To cure it all!

THE SUICIDE

1

I CAME away from a sodden grave
Feeling I had no soul to save:
Only I shivered chill and faint
Already with the graveyard taint.

2

From myself I seemed to shrink:
Of the coming end I would not think:
But I wandered all adread
In a dream of being dead.

3

The wind rose up against the moon
With a ghoulisn whisper: Soon, soon!
While over the dim November town
Like a black opal night came down.

4

All unavailing I had come
To a widespread city slum:
A yellow blur thro' darkness seen,
Gashed with infernal red and green.

5

It was a most polluted zone
Of crumbling brick and grimy stone,
Where evil mouldered old and dank,
And thugs and thieves and harlots drank.

6

Nightlong its streets were doomed to be
Lurid lanes of infamy;
Made for denizens who dwell
Fitly in the stews of Hell.

7

Yet to its first saloon I fled
For the feel of liquor in my head:
For the warm, slow, low release
Of stupor in the stead of peace.

8

One drink—then shuddering I withdrew
From the poor, besotted crew:
Better the aura of despair
Than any reeking solace there.

9

From myself I seemed to shrink:
Of the coming end I would not think:
But still I wandered all adread
In a dream of being dead.

10

The wind rose up against the moon
With a ghoulish whisper: Soon, soon!
While over the dim November town
Like a black opal night came down.

11

By a church I stood of an age ago,
And its gothic portals gazed upon:
Grim saints there hailed the Crucified:
A painted girl was by my side.

12

Glint o' the moon on window-pane:
Garnet and gold where the Lamb was slain:
But dark and silent all within:
And we without like shades of sin.

13

The painted girl made low moan,
Leaning against the carven stone,
Then turned to me with doubtful stare:
A hood fell back from her raven hair.

14

What heart I had went out to her
Because her eyes were sinister,
And wan disease and poverty
Dispoiled a face still fair to see.

15

As we were in some vaulted aisle,
In low tones we talked awhile:
We talked as those before the dead:
Something of this I mind she said:

16

"Once with my baby I came here:
Once in the young, enchanted year:
The leaves were little and green with spring,
And here we came for the christening.

17

"That was a time when I could bless
Everything in my happiness:
Then blackness came, and burial—
And I lost all, and all, and all.

18

"Now every day that dawns for me
Weighs me down with misery:—
But come to-night and be my friend:
To-night for me may be the end."

19

Then thro' alternate glare and gloom
I followed her to an attic room:
A candle there was to see it by—
God, 'twas a drear place to die!

20

Tho' I had bought upon the way
Good rum to deaden our dismay,
Yet still I shivered chill and faint
Already with the graveyard taint.

21

The rum was on the table set
When she drew from her breast an amulet,
And there fell in her hand, as she touched a spring,
A powder white and glistening.

22

“Friend, I am weary of my years!
Of the strain and pain and useless tears!
This little powder is so full of sleep—
Take it—and wake no more to weep!

23

“You, I know, won’t stay my hand!
You go my way—you understand!”
Then on the rum the powder gleamed:
Swift she drank it; soon she dreamed.

24

Awhile she told a tale to me
Of a strange lover, absently:
Awhile she muttered of a child
From her side by Death beguiled.

25

Then she had a fancy sweet
Of rambling thro’ a field of wheat
Where flaming scarlet poppies grew:
And the sun sank low; and the sky was blue.

26

With closing eyes, and drooping head,
I lifted her to the mean bed,
And white and quiet there she lay—
Already she was on her way.

27

Something I found of the powder lit
Upon her glass; I drank from it:
Filled it again and yet again—
Reeled, and sank beside her then.

28

Thro' the long night as she had died
The painted girl lay by my side:
In the grey of dawn by a creaking stair
I crept away and left her there.

BALLADE OF WOEFUL CERTAINTIES

WE must kill if we would live:
This is the first of certainties:
God leaves us no alternative
Despite the preachers' sophistries:
Let them argue as they please
The jungle law is over us!
For any man who cares or sees
This World of ours goes ruinous.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

We must weak and ugly grow:
This is the worst of certainties:
'Tis a pretty thing to be young, I know,
And life is full of pleasantries:
But age and pain will bend the knees
Of the strongest, fairest, best of us:
No bodies reach beyond disease:
This World of ours goes ruinous.

We must all in the graveyard lie:
This is the last of certainties:
Strange horizons some descry,
That to the mass are fantasies:
But take your choice of theories
To meet an end so villainous,
In this at least each one agrees:
This World of ours goes ruinous.

Brother, I see too much to think
That dust is the utter end of us:
But oft from what's involved I shrink:
This World of ours goes ruinous.

BALLADE OF EVIL

EVIL! What poor argument
We mortals hear to make us trust
That as for God he never meant
To bait this hook of pain with lust!
Then by what devil was it thrust
Thro' the filmy, first upheaval
Of our planetary dust?
No man knoweth the end of evil.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

By dint of wishing, sages say,
Things shape themselves much as we see;
And filth and pain are the price we pay
Largely for the will to be;
That we evolve contingently
On such acceptance and receipt:
Is this the measure of God's mercy?
No man knoweth the end of evil.

Say if you choose there is naught but good:
Harden your heart and soften your brain:
Say wrong is right misunderstood:
Close your eyes to filth and pain:
Swear all is right and all is sane,
And all correct from days primeval:
And then—well, then what will you gain?
No man knoweth the end of evil.

We strive in mud forever obscure,
Forever in hope of some reprieve,
But living or dead we are not sure:
No man knoweth the end of evil.

THE TIGER OF DESIRE

Villanelle

STARVING, savage, I aspire
To the red meat of all the World:
I am the Tiger of Desire!

With teeth bared, and claws uncurled,
By leave o' God I creep to slay
The innocent of all the World.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

Out of the yellow, glaring day,
When I glut my appetite,
To my lair I slink away.

But in the black, returning night
I leap resistless on my prey,
Mad with agony and fright.

The quick flesh I tear away,
Writhing till the blood is hurled
On leaf and flower and sodden clay.

My teeth are bared, my claws uncurled,
Of the red meat I never tire;
In the black jungle of the World
I am the Tiger of Desire!

BALLADE OF THE SELF CONCEALED

THIS of you is not the best,
This little self so anxious here:
Partially you manifest,
But you are other than the mere
Mind and body you appear:
Behind the scenes it seems to me,
From day to day and year to year,
You remain essentially.

You wake and sleep: the small impress
Of things around soon passes: still
This consciousness is more or less
Some phosphorescence of the Will:
A surface light too weak to fill
The underlying entity
Whose lust of living naught may kill:
You remain essentially.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

And while your body wears away,
And all your thoughts disintegrate,
You weave new vestures every day,
And dreams with dreams obliterate:
For you the outer ways await
Because of your desire to be:
But high or low, thro' every state,
You remain essentially.

From life to life you dwell within
A candle gleam of memory;
And as it vanishes—what then?
You remain essentially.

BALLADE OF THE MYSTIC AND THE MUD

IF I from universal mud
By chance malign came bubbling
Uncouthly into flesh and blood,
Ugly, futile, struggling,
All in mud again to bring—
Why then at the heart of me
What is this that needs must sing?
There is no end to mystery.

If I, with reverence, would read
Upon the mud God's autograph,
And find instead a wormy screed,
With never a sign on my behalf
To light my coming epitaph—
Why then at the heart of me
What is this that needs must laugh?
There is no end to mystery.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

If I, a mere automaton
In a brief and paltry play,
Am but a group of atoms drawn
Powerless upon my way
To mud again, as savants say—
Why then at the heart of me
What is this that needs must pray?
There is no end to mystery.

Brother, kneel intuitive
To a stone if you will, or a carven tree!
And sing and laugh and pray—and live!
There is no end to mystery.

BALLADE OF COMFORTABLE DOCTRINE

So we have come to life, it seems,
And would escape the consequence;
And many men, with many schemes,
Would tell us how and why and whence;
Good friends, I do you reverence,
But weary of your subtleties:
I only pray, when we go hence,
God will put us all at ease.

Maybe some Jack-o'-Lantern gleams
Across the swamp of my offence;
Maybe too high my heart esteems
God's ultimate benevolence;
Of knowledge I make no pretence,
My one religion's been to please,
But this I hold in confidence:
God will put us all at ease.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

By night more faith I have in dreams
Than ever by day in common-sense;
And there's more of night than day meseems,
And weird deeps beyond science
To test our wee intelligence
And little glow-worm theories:
At night I think, for recompense,
God will put us all at ease.

Brother, I find some evidence,
Despite our many miseries,
That after life's last negligence
God will put us all at ease.

DEJECTION

So long I've sought without avail,
And now what can I do?
My brain is like a ragged sail
The wind blows through!

UNLESS

BETWEEN ourselves I must confess
Tho I may talk somewhat of God
Yet I have found no God, unless—
God is a state of consciousness.

QUESTION

SOME cool and patient presence I recall
Vaguely thro' my troubled memory
When I arise from my too frequent fall:
Who is this fellow that has charge of me?
There may be something in it, after all.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

POLITY

WITH good-will, and a touch of mirth,
To clear and clean and plant and plan
The common levels of the Earth:—
What more should God then ask of Man?

ECONOMY

THE fine contempt that Christ felt
For his coat, and cash, and wherewithal,
Is a virtue too occasional
Methinks for our continuance!

JUSTICE

SPARE him, you say! So be it, then!
But I think it a maudlin kindness,
And fear some day for better men
'Twill breed a villainous excess!

'Tis easy enough to be merciful,
But to be just is an excellence
Beyond all flight of sentiment!

PERSISTENCE

THE pains of Life are all too many,
And the Way is doubtful everywhere;
But I have gone as far as any,
And seen—and I do not despair!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

ASPIRATION

BUT give me the air! Always the air!
The clean ways, and wings, wings,
To reach beyond accepted things,
And venture flights unendable!

PROTEST

THESE moralists are growing over-nice:
Surely, my friend, some need there is for spice!
The salt and pepper of impropriety—
I would not call it vice.

ALARM

I DEPEND upon a friend,
But now I think a worm
Might rightly twist itself by way of sneer
At all this talk of over-ruling love:
There is some dictum, old or new,
I leave it you,
As below so above:
And that be true there's much to fear:
Give me a sword! I hear
The hiss of the universal snake! I hear
The abysmal growl of existence!

LOVE

Love will ever find a way
To turn the darkest night to day:
Out of chaos and mischance,
And every wicked circumstance,
'Twill build itself a home again
Within the hearts of erring men;
But hell is made by its inhabitants.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

WHITE MAGIC

CANDOR may be devilish,
And truth untimely open hell:
Better pretend the thing you wish;
Anon you may, if you wish and wish,
Achieve a miracle.

Once an ugly truth I saw,
And I hid it with a lie:
Cunning, for I knew the law,
I covered it, and smothered it,
And killed it with a lie:
No man there was that knew of it,
And many days went by.

Lo, something fair hath risen like
A lily from the sod!
And the lie is now the truth of it,
Become the splendid truth of it—
Glory be to God!

THE ARTIZAN

GIVE me thick material!
Stuff to mould!
O the wonder and the feel of it
When I control and hold!
What nobler is there in your thin etherial?
In gas than gold?
God himself must be fascinated with matter—
Seeing he has made so much of it.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

BY THE UNUSUAL HEAD WAITER

I understand
The pride of being polite
To a little child, or one in age,
Or to a stranger in the land.
But when I face these nightly belly-stretchers,
These painted trulls, and fashionable owls,
I wonder how it is they never feel
The inferiority of being served.

THE JEWEL THAT CAME

ONCE an artless maiden,
Fair and sweet,
Knelt too low, they say,
At an idol's feet—
Just the usual idol
Made of the usual clay,
That went to dust entirely
In the usual way.

Alas and alas for a maiden
Put to scorn!
All soiled with the dust of her idol,
And left forlorn!
But in the dust she found
A jewel one day—
A jewel of wondrous beauty,
So they say.

Then she sang: "Now little I care
For the World so cruel;—
O what were the world to me
Without my jewel!

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

For this—ah, this is the heart
Of my idol of clay!
And I'll keep it and love it forever—
Whatever they say!"

IN THE DARK

At the crowded corner of a street,
Where all the busy people meet,
As I went by this afternoon
A man was tapping with a stick,
And saying: "Please, someone, be kind
And lead me over; I am blind."

I took him by the arm, and soon
We both were on the other side.
I shook his hand, and said: "All right!"

But in the blue and golden day
It pierced me through to hear him say:
"Thank you, friend—good-night!"

PRAYER FOR A DEAD FRIEND

SAY no word to me of his bad ways;
I knew them well enough—his faults—his flaws:
Because he guarded me thro' desperate days
I do not care how much a liar he was!

He will be seen no more of you or me:
He was an evil man the good folk say:
I light this incense to his memory:
Because of him I go alive to-day.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

I know not what it means, this being dead:
Awake, asleep, somewhere beyond the rim:
But to myself these many hours I've said,
Murmuring as in some temple, quiet, dim:
Good Will of all the World, be good to him!
Good Will of all the World recover him!
Out of the dark be tender to his need,
Whatever it may be, since he is dead!
Good Will of all the World, be good to him!

JUST SO

BECAUSE the fellow thinks me rich
These days he bows to me:
The beggar bows to dollars;
He does not bow to me.

THE EMPEROR

MATTERS there are, and a million,
To vex my fleeting hours:
I watch my wife arranging
Simple, original flowers.

CHOICE

WELL, if that's our fate,
I would rather go down with those I love
Than float among those I hate.

IMMORTAL

THERE is a look in her eyes
Old as the wind between the stars—
And young as the dawn of to-morrow.

COMPLETE POEMS OF TOM MACINNES

NOW THEN

THERE's very little honey
These days for any man:
Take it where you find it!
Taste it while you can!

BROKEN DAYS

1

I MIND no more, nor care to understand,
Those dull brutalities too long endured;
I only thought of work as I came forth
Most fitted to my convalescent hand;
Of old ambitions haply I am cured.
This city builded nobly in the North
Affords me refuge from an outworn land.

2

Somewhile I drifted without any plans,
And found no place until this night work came
For words misspelt and letters gone askew
In the rigmarole the glum proof-reader scans.
I've now good lodging of a simple dame
In a cottage rustic where all else is new
On a quiet street of decent artizans.

3

I wonder what she was at seventeen,
This landlady of mine so withered now
With three score round of years. Her cheeriness
O'ercomes her poverty and widowed mien;
She treasures little things, and tells me how
She keeps the fashion of her Sabbath dress,—
Her velvet bonnet and silk grenadine.

4

Her cottage has a wholesome atmosphere
Of golden thyme and rue and mignonette;
It seems from days too secular withdrawn,
A place to meditate, or in austere
Clean solitude to sleep and to forget
The inevitable ache of things forgone;
'Twas surely some good fairy led me here.

5

My room is high and bare; a window shows
A maple tree without where sparrows keep
In constant parlement; the other looks
Blankly 'gainst a wall; that one I close.
To ease my soul I laid upon a heap
Of long, unopened, Calvinistic books
The splendid contradiction of a rose.

6

As some be curious in choice of wines
From wattled bottles and monastic jugs,
Or crusted kegs in roguish cellars hid,
So I've been fond with many anodynes,
Most dopy sirops and oblivious drugs,
To baffle pain and droop the uneasy lid,
And loose the soul from all its rough confines.

7

But now to wines or drugs I give no thought,
Nor seek relief as in my evil day
When evil things conspired to batter me
Until with stress and anguish overwrought
I think some rampart of my brain gave way;
For in the truce of this pale apathy
The past appears a dream—the future naught.

8

In a grimy office of the *Daily Blink*
 A reader's desk is set apart for me,
 And there at night I work from eight till four
 The wage is fair, with little need to think;
 In automatic way unerringly.
 Tho' but a novice, I correct and score
 The acrid galleys rank with printer's ink.

9

A cozy creamerie they call the *Star*
 At one o'clock I visit hungrily,
 For rolls and coffee and a bowl of soup;
 The place is spotless kept, and popular
 With sober night-hawks dining frugally;
 Me they class there with a favored group—
 Good fellows all as printers always are.

10

'Tis well nigh dawn before I find my bed
 Where everything is clean prepared for me.
 A monoplane of dreams with wings unfurled
 I fancy it, the pillow 'neath my head,
 As smoothly up some vast acclivity
 In spreading spiral ways I leave the World;
 Of it and all things over-wearied.

11

Luxurious I sleep the morning through,
 Or lie awake, inert with lazy eyes
 Fixt on the bars of light that slip between
 The close green-shuttered windows palely blue.
 And under no compulsion yet to rise,
 And with no mordant thought to intervene,
 I doze and dream alternately till two.

12

And day by day thus unconcerned I live,
 Forgetting former things that did me wrong;
 Thankful for this safe obscurity,
 And glad for the added comfort I can give
 One poor old woman who has lived too long;
 Of late I find her growing motherly,
 And in her harmless way inquisitive.

13

She wonders much at me and at my ways;
 I am to her a man of mystery,
 Because I breakfast in the afternoon.
 But pleased she always is to have me praise
 Her toast and marmalade and good black tea;
 And the porridge bowl, and her last silver spoon,
 Worn thin with usage since Victorian days.

14

And in that hour of other times she talks;
 Once this cottage was the Manse, she says,
 And the city reached not here to bar at all
 The Minister from his long evening walks;
 It vexes her to see brick terraces
 Now crowding 'gainst the very garden wall
 Where still his sunflowers grow, and hollyhocks.

15

Yestermorn with plaintive roundelay
 Came to our street the hurdy-gurdy man;
 The wheeling melody of his machine
 Gave color to my dreaming as I lay,
 Remote as some Tibetan caravan,
 Or marvel once of Marco Polo seen
 Down jaded avenues of old Cathay.

16

The rudest music heard thro' sleep is fine
 Beyond the reach of art or instruments;
 With tunefulest high magic I have crost
 Over the violet edge of lands divine,
 And lifting many jeweled trophies thence
 I wake with joy—but waking they are lost
 Along the dim, dream-tangled border line.

17

A wind-swept common far from streets and towers
 I found to-day with thistles overrun;
 The year is on the turn, the summer yields,
 The waning season all the air endowers
 With the deeper gold of our September sun,
 Reluctant yet to leave the long-loved fields,
 Now mauve and blue with elvish autumn flowers.

18

For me what remnant fate remains in store?
 What dull or useless ending will be mine?
 I count these days detached, this work unplated,
 I know the best of me has gone before,
 And all that youth once promised I resign;
 But lone on that allegiant, floral waste
 I bared my head to Beauty evermore.

19

And still she comes to me, tho' I be old,
 Living in covered ways and namelessly;
 And still her fields of amaranth await,
 And glorious across the manifold
 Dim valleys of the dead exalt I see
 Her azure gardens gleaming, and the great
 Marble towers of morning tipt with gold.

SOME OTHER LIFE

Villanelle

I HAVE forgotten the kingdom where,
Young in a city of luxury,
I on a time was a lute-player.

Only I know the gods were there
Brooding o'er us goldenly:
But I have forgotten the kingdom where.

I played where led a thoro'fare
In marble fine to the blue sea:
And I was an excellent lute-player.

Ever the early summer air
With flowers and fruits and love all free:
But I have forgotten the kingdom where.

Against this age I struggle and swear:
Pestered and pinned with puritanry:
I who once was a lute-player.

Still in my heart I dream how fair
That other life appeared to me:
But I have forgotten the kingdom where
I on a time was a lute-player.

BALLADE OF RAGS

ONCE to my fancy I was drest,
Ready to challenge the ways of chance:
Body and bone were of the best,
And I rode away in the blue distance
And ravisht Life in high joyance
Of all her many beauties: Hey,
How now with altered countenance
I go in the rags of a yesterday!

Once I went largely at my ease,
And humored myself with fine gusto:
Nor riches then nor dignities
I sought, but the rare scenario
Where love is wrought to a rosy glow
With clinging to forbidden clay:
And I had it and had it and had it—so
I go in the rags of a yesterday!

I have no heart for the poverty
That comes to all—you understand:
Yet with these relics left to me,
This jewel, this ribbon contraband,
From my illicit, vanisht land,
I keep what fashion I may—but say
Is there no future in my hand?
I go in the rags of a yesterday!

O, tell me I'll travel sometime in style
To a fair estate so far and away!
For I sing me a weary tune the while
I go in the rags of a yesterday!

BALLADE OF THE EASY WAY

God I think is a balancer,
And runs the World by compromise:
From brief observing I infer
His line of least resistance lies
Curving smoothly thro' the skies,
Forever mixing night and day,
With all that such a thing implies:
Myself, I go the easy way.

'Tis a good thing at times to fight:
To give a blow, and take a blow,
And hand it back with gathered might:
'Tis the bully plan of the World below:
And yet somehow as we older grow
We're not so keen for every fray:
We'd liefer miss than meet a foe:
Myself, I go the easy way.

Troubles a-plenty we may not pass:
Tangles too many we cannot untie:
And there's a pitiful end for us all, alas!
But we can slip round so much, if we try,
Or stay things off till by and by
We find they mostly are off to stay,
Or matter no more at all: that's why
Myself, I go the easy way.

And the value of laughter, the value of tears,
And the meaning of Life may be as it may:
In the bitter-sweet wisdom of later years
Myself, I go the easy way.

BALLADE OF FAITH

I THINK between my cradle-bars
Of a summer night there fell to me
Some pale religion of the stars,
While an old Moon lookt weirdly
At me thro' an apple-tree
And fixt my faith in a fair One
Fading out of memory:
But I would that I knew where my Lord is gone!

Things there are by night I know
That in the day I ne'er detect:
Stars that shine from long ago
Until bewildered I suspect
The obvious World is not correct,
And fear to lean too much upon
The showings of mere intellect:
But I would that I knew where my Lord is gone!

In my own fashion I persist:
No counsel of despair I brook:
Neither for priest nor pessimist,
Nor the jealous God nor his black Book:
My early faith I've not forsook
For the low things that pass anon:
With eyes unspoiled to the stars I look—
But I would that I knew where my Lord is gone!

And caring less how the World esteems
Me or my doing I go on
With incommunicable dreams—
But I would that I knew where my Lord is gone!

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DEPARTURE

LET me from this World go free
Before the last of me is spent!
While yet some few fair girls lament,
And some good fellows cherish me!

TO THE NIGHT

Cantel

Good luck to all who throng
The ways of laughter and song!
But if for some they seem too brief—
For some they seem too long.

Myself I have been a great thief
Of pleasure to lighten my grief,
But now—say now do you fancy it wrong
If I turn to the night for relief?

Good luck to all who throng
The ways of laughter and song!
But weary I turn to the night for relief—
And I pray that the night be long.

BALLADE OF SLEEP

I'VE lost my taste for things somehow
That on a time were very sweet:
Sin has no savor for me now,—
I find no apples good to eat:
You laugh, and say that I'm effete,
But you are on the way, my friend,
And after me you'll soon repeat:
Sleep is the best thing in the end.

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Yet I come not with sour intent
Against my old desires to prate:
Truly I do not repent,
I only wish I knew some great
Exultant vice to stimulate
What spark of Life remains to spend:
But this I feel, as the hour grows late,
Sleep is the best thing in the end.

All things wear out, so much we see:
All things must fall without reprieve:
Yet spite of that invincibly
Upon the brink I still believe
That God has hidden up his sleeve
For us some golden dividend:
What think you then we shall receive?
Sleep is the best thing in the end.

Brother, down on a soundless bed
From the ways of pain may we descend!
The stars creep dimly overhead:—
Sleep is the best thing in the end.

BALLADE OF WAITING

THERE was a time that Death for me
Unbalanced every new delight:
Its cold, abhorrent mystery
Haunted me by day and night:
I felt its noisome, clammy blight
Making of life a mildewed thing:
But now to its face I cry: Alright!
I'm no afraid for the outgoing!

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Because so many I loved have gone
I stare a-wondering at the skies:
The World below I look upon
With listless, old, exhausted eyes:
The while for every friend who dies
I feel a queerish loosening
Within of all familiar ties:
I'm no afraid for the outgoing!

I weary under a weight of days,
Withering and too sensible
Of aged needs and altered ways:
But this one thing is good to tell:
In the wintry desert where I dwell
Some rumor I have heard of spring,
And I have dreamed of asphodel:
I'm no afraid of the outgoing!

The sweet renewal of the air,
And the call of Youth recovering—
Do these await me yet somewhere?
I'm no afraid of the outgoing!

WITH THE SEVEN SLEEPERS

Cantel

O FAIRY, take me far
To some enchanted star!
Let me go sleep for a thousand years
Where the Seven Sleepers are!

Beyond the striving spheres,
Beyond all hopes or fears,
Where never a black or golden bar
Of Hell or Heaven appears!

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O Fairy, take me far
Away from things that are!
Let me go sleep for a thousand years
In some enchanted star!

THE GENTLE KNAVE

Cantel

THE knave had gathered much odd
And singular knowledge abroad
Regarding all flowers that are under the sun,
And bones that are under the sod.

The end of his life had begun,
And he felt that his travels were done,
But he smiled in finding the asphodel nod
At the root of minus one.

Then he willed his bones to the sod,
And his flowers to the fields that he trod,
And he bowed at the root of minus one
To the wind that is older than God.

THE ISLES OF GOLD

Cantel

AWAY from days too cold,
Away from hearts too old,
Honey-Mouth, O Honey-Mouth,
I go to the Isles of Gold!

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Will it be to North or South
That I find them, Honey-Mouth?
The King no entry there I'm told
Except the dead alloweth!

So be it, from days too cold!
So be it, from hearts too old!
Honey-Mouth, O Honey-Mouth,
I go to the Isles of Gold!

NOTES.

"FEY."

Fey: literally "On the way," "Death-bound." A Saxon word denoting a Celtic mood. One who not only realizes himself on the inevitable way, but through some unusual experience in some instant of Time, has awakened to an alien, inexplicable Existence, that leaves him bewildered, foolishly indifferent, madly impersonal, to the concerns of Life. To the Highlander the full meaning of the term is not expressed in either of the following passages, but it lurks between them:

"The Scotch peasants have a word that might be applied to every existence. In their legends they give 'Fey' to the frame of mind of a man who, notwithstanding all his efforts, notwithstanding all help and advice, is forced by some irresistible impulse toward some inevitable catastrophe. It is thus that James I—the James of Catherine Douglas—was 'fey' when he went, notwithstanding the terrible omens of earth, heaven and hell, to spend the Christmas holidays in the gloomy castle of Perth, where his assassin, the traitor Robert Græme, lay in wait for him."—*Maurice Maeterlinck*.

"A mermaid had once met a piper on Sandag beach, and there sang to him a long, bright midsummer's night, so that in the morning he was found stricken crazy, and from thenceforward, till the day he died, said only one form of words; what they were in the original Gaelic I cannot tell, but they were thus translated: 'Ah! the sweet singing out of the sea!'"—*Robert Louis Stevenson*.

"THE DAMOZEL OF DOOM."

"The peace of a thousand years."

"The Abbot gave me much instruction in matters of religion. One day, in a discourse on fundamental virtue, which I found difficult, he touched at some length on the nature and conditions of Hell. And I remember,

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in describing those regions of Hell which underlie the Paradise of the West, he stated, incidentally, that souls are only loosed therefrom by exhaustion of the livid, lurid or dark emotions that keep them there—by that, and the re-awakening of desires. By some of these desires the souls are drawn outward to Earth again, while through others, more subtle and fine, they pass into the Paradise of the West as naturally as a butterfly rises from the chrysalis. But having attained this state, and feeling supreme relief from recent pain and horror, they are prone to remain inactive, become lethargic, and are soon overcome by the delicious atmosphere of the place. And thus they lie peacefully intoxicated for a thousand years. Then their lives end. But the root essence of them all, I was told, is drawn upon again by influences ever seeking occasion for incarnation. And so, in Limbo, awaiting the birth conditioned by their divers natures, they and all manner of planetary life remain in suspense, like to the clouds in the sky, which await opportunity for return to Earth in endless drops of rain.”—*The Teaching of Tao*.

“THE RHYME OF JACQUES VALBEAU.”

This is the true version of the Chasse Galerie legend of Quebec.

“LONESOME BAR.”

“Triple golden years”—(Third stanza, fifth line.)—The Klondike gold-rush, the greatest in history, took place from 1897 to 1900, during which period the Canadian North yielded about one hundred million dollars in placer gold.

“On a lay.”—(Sixth stanza, first line.)—A phrase originating perhaps with the sealers of Behring Sea, with whom it meant an allowance, in lieu of wages, of a certain percentage of the value of seal-skins secured by the hunters. In mining parlance, to “work a claim on a lay” meant to have an agreed percentage of the clean-up or output.

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"I mush'd along."—(Ninth stanza, fifth line.)—Mush—mush on—corruption of French Canadian "marchons,"—the travelling word for men and dogs throughout the Canadian North and Alaska.

"Sourdough."—(Twenty-first stanza, second line.)—Early prospectors in mining regions of the Far West carried with them a lump of sour-dough, in lieu of yeast, for making camp-bread, and were dubbed "sourdoughs." In the Yukon, however, the term was generally applied to those who had spent an entire winter in that region during the first years of the gold-rush.

"Mac an Diaoul—Beishta-Mor."—(Thirty-sixth stanza, third line.)—Gaelic, meaning "The offspring of Satan—the Great Beast."

Ballade of the Picaroon:—"He has much wrong resting on himself, and has crept through the worm-holes of all sorts of errors, in order to be able to reach many obscure souls on their secret paths. Forever dwelling in some kind of love, and some kind of selfishness and enjoyment. Powerful, and at the same time obscure and resigned. Constantly loafing in the sunshine, and yet knowing the ladder which leads to the sublime to be near at hand,"—*Friedrich Nietzsche*.

Villanelle of Mutton:—Dam—A coin, I am told, of small value, used somewhere in the Orient, perhaps India, and there giving rise to a familiar phrase, as did the coin known as "rap" in Ireland. This in explanation, lest the writer be thought profane.

Mirelle of Found Money:—"Gerard de Nerval lived the transfigured inner life of the dreamer. 'I am very tired of life!' he says. And like so many dreamers, who have all the luminous darkness of the universe in their brains, he found his most precious and uninterrupted solitude in the crowded and more sordid streets of great cities."—*Arthur Symons*.

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Ballade of Fine Eating:—In the matter of fine eating, and in maintaining it as something more than the meat, the good Sir Thomas Browne thus commended Epicurus: "He (Epicurus) was contented with bread and water, and when he would dine with Jove, and pretend unto epulation, he desired no other addition than a piece of Cytheridian cheese."

Dejection, et al.:—In a little workshop under my hat are some broken ballades and unused lines, from which I have hastily contrived these few quatrains, having now neither time nor inclination to do more with them.

AN AFTERWORD

By F. P.

Tom MacInnes was born at Dresden, County Kent, Ontario, the 29th October, 1867. He is Canadian by several generations, but of Scotch and Spanish descent. His father, Hon. Thomas Robert McInnes, was for many years a Senator of Canada, and sometime Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia. His younger brother, Hon. W. W. B. McInnes, who is accounted one of the most brilliant of Canadian orators, was the youngest member of Parliament in the early days of the Laurier regime, and was Governor of the Klondike during one of its most picturesque periods. Tom has not been in public life. He was blessed with the names Thomas Robert Edward, but, heartily disliking the length of these for literary purposes, he shortened the first, and dropped the other two, at the same time restoring the abbreviated *Mc* spelling to the full *Mac* of the clan. Professionally he is known to his friends as T.R.E. He passed inconspicuously through Toronto University, graduating in 1889. In the same year he secretly married Laura, second daughter of Dr. John Hostetter, a descendant of a prominent U.E. Loyalist family of Niagara. Through various lands, and through good and evil days, they have been together for the most part ever since. Their only son, Loftus, married Natalie, the only daughter of Canada's premier poet, Archibald Lampman, who happened to be born in the same corner of Ontario as MacInnes. This younger couple are well known in Ottawa governmental circles.

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In 1893 MacInnes was admitted to the bar of British Columbia, but he has only practised intermittently. He has executed confidential missions for several governments in Canada and overseas. In 1909 and 1910 he drafted the new immigration laws, and the anti-narcotic laws, of Canada. He is reputed to have an intimate knowledge of China, and of Oriental questions. He promoted the taking down of the walls of Canton, and the installation of a modern tramway system in that ancient city. He is a director of the Canton Tramway Company, and the only foreign member of it.

MacInnes published nothing until after he was thirty, and very little before he was forty, but what he did publish before that was as finished and forceful as anything later, such as "The Chilcoot Pass" in 1898, "For the Crowning of the King," and "Beacon Hill" in 1902, and "Cactus" in 1903.

He is not now likely to write any more verse, so this edition may be taken as final and complete. The contents have been grouped under three subtitles, "Amber Lands," "Lonesome Bar," and "Roundabout Rhymes," showing three somewhat distinct phases of development as the years pass.

MacInnes is original. He has invented new and strong forms of stanza for narrative poems, as in "Broken Days," "The Chilcoot Pass" and "Lonesome Bar." He has looked neither to British nor American modern writers for models. His use of rhymed stanzas ending on unrhymed lines, as in "Underground," "Jill," part of "The Damsel of Doom" and some shorter poems, has probably never been attempted before, certainly not to any extent, and can only be done with pleasing effect by one like himself who can ring music out of words, rhyme

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or no rhyme, and against rhyme. Also the sustained and regular use of a concealed rhyme throughout the old English ballad form, as in "The Damozel of Doom," "The Wrong Way," and "The Gardens of Oblivion," is unique, and yields an effect in keeping with the bizarre subject matter of these poems. It may be regretted that there is no evidence of classic training apparent in his work. He writes as one who never knew or cared to know the measures and mythology of Greece and Rome. He is a devotee of something wilder, greener, and wider, which he calls beauty, but which is more truly called romance. In much he is of the earth earthy, and revels in the touch and effect of matter. In his little poem, "The Artizan," we feel that it is himself who cries:

Give me thick material!
Stuff to mould!

and who thinks "God must be fascinated with matter, seeing he has made so much of it!"

In the "Amber Lands" group of poems his work is replete with glamor coming perhaps from some blend of Celtic and Saracenic stories in his imagination, or possibly from his:

Delectable zones of heathenry
Down under the Lost Indies!

But although he may, at times, be fond of haunting the hot ports of heathen lands, yet he belongs by nature to northern provinces. He finds in cool climates the only proper habitat for his romance. He wanders through forests of maple and oak,

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where there is always a breeze blowing, and where the sound of banjo and mandolin may be heard to mingle with the sound of laughing children and singing birds. Yet he loves chop-houses of the by-ways, and has a fine nose for savory cooking. He makes more of food than of drink, but finds poetry indiscriminately all the way from his stomach to the stars.

His work in the second group has a stronger and manlier tone. It is distinctively Canadian, both as to scenery and personnel, in the first half. The latter half of this group is of a religious character. But the religion, whatever it may be, is neither Christian nor Mahometan, and but faintly Buddhist in any orthodox form.

The last group, "Roundabout Rhymes," is probably most characteristic of the writer, his ideas and experiences. He introduces this group with an illuminating essay telling of a chance entrance to an old bookshop in Montreal. He has given an accurate description; I remember the place well. Its scholarly proprietor, Eben Picken, was beloved by all men of letters in Montreal. Because of what was given him in that bookshop, MacInnes came to know, to use, and to modify for his own purposes certain archaic forms of French verse.

He has poured a strong liquor into these old bottles, but he has made them fit to contain it. Robert Louis Stevenson, in his essay on Charles of Orleans, has made reference to these French forms of verse in slighting terms. So far as the usual boudoir ballades and villanelles made by mincing courtiers and their modern society imitators go, Stevenson was undoubtedly right. Of them he says:

"The common Scotch saying on the sight of

anything operose and finical, 'he must have had little to do that made that,' might be put as epigraph on all the song books of old France. . . . Making such sorts of verse belongs to the same class of pleasures as guessing acrostics. It is almost purely formal, almost purely verbal. It must be done gently and gingerly. . . . So that these forms are suitable rather for those who wish to make verses than for those who wish to express opinions."

Stevenson might have been the first to admit an exception if the work of MacInnes had been before him. Because MacInnes does express opinions, and very strong and controversial opinions, in these forms. He has made the ballade especially a container of virile thought. There is nothing "done gently and gingerly" about them. There is swift strength and sureness of touch in the hand that wrought them. Only Villon once wrote such ballades; but his voice was forever thin, plaintive, and appealing. MacInnes sings in a deep, bass, and he is seldom afraid, and never quite hopeless. Against the stark despair shown in such compositions as "Elysium," "The Body Diseased," "The Tiger of Desire," and "The Suicide," he reliantly, and almost defiantly, ends on a religious note in the ballades of "The Self Concealed," "Comfortable Doctrine," "The Mystic and the Mud," "Faith," "Sleep," and "Waiting."

As to the form used in many of these, his last writings, he has well justified in English the use of what he calls the Rossetti form of ballade. But, although having a fair knowledge of French-Canadian verse, I have not been able to find any example of that form of villanelle which Mac-

Innes says "in Quebec one has ventured to vary," nor yet of any local form which he calls the "mir-elle." These may be of his own invention and naming, as well as those sad little carols which he calls cantels. If so he cannot escape the charge of being misleading in this matter, and of trifling with established form. On the other hand, however, he is scrupulously correct in the use of the Petrarchan model for his sonnets. Of the eighteen legitimate variations allowable in the sestet of the Petrarchan model he only uses one, and that the rare *a, b, a, a, b, a*, sequence. But of this form of sestet William Sharp, in his "Sonnets of This Century," writes: "Rossetti used to say that he considered this form to be the best form of sestet, if it could only be achieved without any damage to intellectual substance."

MacInnes has written a number of short poems somewhat after the form of Japanese *uta*. They are written, however, in a different spirit; they have nothing of the delicate, wistful suggestiveness of the Japanese poems, excepting perhaps, "Choice," "The Emperor," and "Immortal." He says of them that they are bits of broken ballades and unused lines, which he has no time to finish. This can hardly be true; they do not read as fragments of larger contemplation. They are terse, opinionative, and somewhat pert. They certainly are not to be classed as symbolist or impressionist. They are concrete; like small ivories cut quickly by a skilled carver.

Among the English to pun, or pound words of like sound or like intent slyly together in different meaning, is considered a low attempt at wit when practised by the ordinary speaker. But the expert

handler of words may use the pun with subtle comicality and piquant effect, as in the case of the Court Jester whom Archbishop Laud so meanly caused to be dismissed for saying grace in the presence of His Grace: "Great praise be to God and little laud to the Devil." The amiable, unfortunate and brilliant poet, Tom Hood, is king of all punsters in humorous verse. But in his serious verse I find no shadow of a pun. MacInnes objects to the French *rime riche*, saying its use would be an insipid pun in English verse. Yet, among his minor originalities, he himself has made serious use of the pun as having musical value; he pounds words of like sound, but different meaning together in his lines, as in the following examples:

"The wreath of scarlet poppy flowers
Fell withering and dead:
The scars upon my burning brow
Were scarlet now instead."

. . .

"On the high Masonic altar were
Three crystal chalices
And they held the sweetest poisons hell can brew."

. . .

"In the shade of night I saw the shade
Of a shrouded maid appear:"

. . .

Apart from the use of the pun by Elizabethan playwrights I recall but one case where this has been done before. Spenser sings:

"Then came faire May, the fayrest mayde on
ground."

MacInnes may have gotten the notion from Spenser. He must have studied him, for he has very

aptly used the Spenserian stanza in his poem "On Beacon Hill." His ode "For the Crowning of the King," has great dignity, and may yet be given place as one of the greatest odes in our literature. Both the latter poems are truly imperial in spirit, but in them both there is a foreboding of new and perilous times, which indeed broke over the world a dozen years after these poems were written.

It is too soon to say what rank Tom MacInnes may be accorded in literature, but his artistry and originality will give him a place. He has paid a tribute to Walt Whitman, in Whitman's own style, but only Coleridge and Edgar Allan Poe seem to have made any strong appeal to him in spirit or manner of versification. It may be that in another generation he will have more readers than now who appreciate life from his standpoint, the sweetness and the bitterness of it, with its all-enveloping mystery forever unsolvable, but forever drawing us onward. It may be that MacInnes is too far off the beaten track to be presently acceptable in his own land. Canada is still throbbing with the heroic emotions aroused by the world war, and its aftermath, and has set herself to serious work and uplift. MacInnes has insight, but scarce any uplift. He is quietly and softly adventurous, but appears to have nothing of the heroic in his make-up. It would seem that, after years of colorful and intense life, he remains a boy seeking his own amusement, complaining loudly enough when he is hurt in the pursuit of it, then straightway forgetting at the prospect of any new pleasure. Yet some there are who find more of upheaval than of uplift in these times when, among the reformers and faddists of every continent, and in every coun-

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try, every dog is having his day, and leaving us mixed in such a mess as never before. The "Go your way and let folk be" refrain of the "Ballade of Meddlers" may be the only ethic really required by the world after all; trusting the general result of such a policy to come nearly right. But, ethic or no ethic, beauty remains, and always there will be some to give ear to the voice that cries:

"Beauty is something too divine for definition; it will tolerate no limitation or criterion; it is the one thing supreme above all that we conceive as truth, utility, or morality; and, wherever and however perceived, it is not the mode of perceiving which should engross us, but the fact;—the fact that we are privileged above other animals, some of us, to become aware of beauty in any degree at all is the most heartening and hopeful thing in life."

*Beauty to me hath been a name
Holier than all God's avatars:
The unconcerned, eternal Flame
Whose fitful gleams between the bars
Of space and time unto the stars
And outer vacancies, attest
Elysium that nothing mars:—
This is the object of my quest.*

1923.

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